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TO

MAX MÜLLER

Aspects of the Vedanta

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ASPECTS OF THE VEDANTA.

CONTENTS.

NOTE.

Advantage has been taken of the issue of this the Fourth Edition to include a fresh chapter on "Vedanta in Daily Life" by Swami Abhedananda, the well-known disciple of Swami Vivekananda.

June 1921. *The Publishers.*

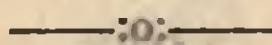
PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

In issuing a Second Edition of "Aspects of the Vedanta," the publishers have taken the opportunity to make the collection of Essays on the Vedanta more comprehensive by the addition of the following papers:— Ethics of the Vedanta by Rao Bahadur Vasudeva J. Kirtikar; The Philosophy of the Vedanta by Dr. Paul Deussen; The Vedanta Philosophy by Swami Vivekananda; and the Vedanta toward all Religions by Swami Abhedananda.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

Many of the papers collected together in this volume originally appeared in the *Brahmavadin* and in the *Indian Review*, while some others were delivered as lectures or written as papers by the gentlemen under whose names they appear. They have not been arranged with a view to any completeness of presentation, but it is hoped that the various aspects of the subject presented herein will stimulate the reader to an appreciation and study of the eternal principles of the Vedanta.

The publishers desire to express their obligations to Mr. M. C. Alasingaperumal, Proprietor of the *Brahmavadin*, for having kindly permitted several of the articles from his journal to appear in this volume.



SOME APPRECIATIONS OF THE VEDANTA.

PROF. MAX MULLER :—I spend my happiest hours in reading Vedantic books. They are to me like the light of the morning, like the pure air of the mountains,—so simple, so true, if once understood.

"The Upanishads are the......sources of......the Vedanta philosophy, a system in which human speculation seems to me to have reached its very acme."

VICTOR COUSIN :—"When we read with attention the poetical and philosophical monuments...of India,...we discover there so many truths, and truths so profound, and which make such a contrast with the meanness of the results at which the European genius has sometimes stopped, that we are constrained to bend the knee before that of the East, and to see in this cradle of the human race the native land of the highest philosophy."

SCHOPENHAUER :—"From every sentence (of the Upanishads of Vedanta) deep, original and sublime thoughts arise, and the whole is pervaded by a high and holy and earnest spirit...In the whole world there is no study...so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Upanishads (the Vedanta)...(They) are products of the highest wisdom...It is destined sooner or later to become the faith of the people."

DR. PAUL DEUSSEN :—"The Vedanta is, now as in the ancient time, living in the mind and heart of every thoughtful Hindu.........This fact may be for poor India in so many misfortunes a great consolation; for the eternal interests are higher than the temporary; and the system of the Vedanta, as founded on the Upanishads and Vedanta-sutras and accomplished by Sankara's commentaries on them,—equal in rank to Plato and Kant—is one of the most valuable products of the genius of mankind in its search for the eternal truth."

DR. GOLDSTUCKER :—"The Vedanta is the sublimest machinery set into motion by Oriental thought."



THE VEDANTA—SOME REASONS FOR ITS STUDY.*

BY MR. N. VYTHINATHA AIYAR, M.A.

THE Vedanta has been described as being both a philosophy and a religion. And it has been thought that this combination of the two into one marks a low stage of civilization. But any sharp separation of the one from the other is logically impossible; and if these stand united in the Vedanta, it is because the two are so intimately connected, that we cannot possibly investigate the one without being inevitably drawn into the other. Philosophy is the science of sciences; its subject-matter is the whole range of scientific phenomena; and its aim is to combine all these into a consistent whole, to dive deep into the verities underlying them and to decide upon the First Principles which form the bases of scientific certainty. Thus Philosophy is necessarily drawn into the problems of ultimate realities, their nature, origin and mutual relations. It is the handmaid of science for science depends for the justification of its methods and of its premises upon philosophy. It is also the twin-sister of religion, for in giving a verdict on the foundations of science, it decides the nature and scope of religion as well. The question of the origin of the world and of its phenomena is only another form of the question regarding the existence and nature of its Creator, be it a blind force in independent control of the force-manifestations in the perpetual stream of causation, into which science has resolved and is resolving the

* A lecture delivered to the Presidency College Literary Society by the late Mr. N. Vythinatha Aiyar, M.A.

march of cosmic events; or be that Creator of the world an intelligent, omnipotent, and benevolent Being, who is immanent in the world, or who watches and controls its process from the outside. The philosophy of the phenomenal cosmos, of its nature and origin, leads us unavoidably to the regions of religion, and the inherent connection between cosmic facts and events on the one hand and their metaphysical explanation and divine origin on the other accounts for the dual character of Vedantism.

It may be thought that we of the nineteenth century, enriched as we are with the intellectual harvest of so many ages can do better than go back to the thoughts of the primitive minds of India. Our intellectual inheritance is the ever-growing accumulation of the mental activity of many centuries and of more than one continent. We are masters of the distilled knowledge of thousands of generations, of which each has sat in judgment over its inheritance from the past and has passed that inheritance through the searching crucible of intellectual criticism. Physical science was literally unknown to the thinkers of the Vedanta; and a reasoned concatenation of the facts and doings of nature was not theirs. They had not therefore that discipline of the intellect which comes of our logical search into the ways of nature; and it may be asked whether we are to sit at the feet of the antiquated Rishis of the Vedic times, while our intellect has received such training and while we are in possession of such stores of reasoned knowledge.

But a deeper investigation into the nature of the human mind on the one hand and of the problems here taken up for solution on the other cannot but give us a pause in this fancied pride of intellectual growth. The province of Reason is not unlimited and illimitable; and

even within its legitimate sphere its sway is not absolute. The whole body of classified and well-arranged facts, in their particular or in their generalised form, and the whole body of inferences from those facts, or briefly, what we call science is confined to human experience; that is, to the interpretation by the subjective mind of the perennial currents of sensations and ideas. Our reasoned knowledge is limited to the contents of our minds, and to the sphere of our consciousness. It is true that of these contents of our minds we project more than one-half into the imagined void which we conceive to lie outside our consciousness. We erect the material world upon the basis, one may say, of our mental states. But in any view we may take of the scope of reason, it must be granted that the mind is ever making irrational leaps into the unknown which lies beyond the province of reason and of science. There are also phenomena, mental and volitional, which are ultra-rational or irrational if you please, which as phenomena must be amenable to scientific enquiry, but as irrational, break loose from the legitimate moorings of science. At the one extreme stands the well-ordered science of objective nature, and at the other, the apparently chaotic phenomena with which the name of metaphysics is connected. The external world of nature is observed and examined; its several aspects are abstracted; and there arises the hierarchy of the sciences. And these same experiences when looked at from their subjective side melt away into sensations and ideas, and reason is irresistibly led to furnish them with a substantial basis in the eternal realities of metaphysics. In building up the elaborate system of the objective sciences, the material world is assumed as a reality; and this reality glares us in the face in the machinery of modern civilisation, and in its social

and political movements. But these same phenomena, so vast in their multiplicity, are all contained in some mysterious fashion within the four corners of the human mind. Reason is the name given to but a change in the form of the presentation of the contents of the mind. The sciences are all of them but emanations from the contact of the mystery known as the human mind with the metaphysical entity which has been supposed to stand outside the mind and contra-distinguished from it. Thus, for our reasoned knowledge a metaphysical basis at each one of its limits is required. It is connected on the one hand with an unknown but assumed matter and on the other with an equally unknown and unknowable mind. Its vision abuts on every side on metaphysical pre-suppositions which go under the several names of matter, mind, causation, space, &c.

These metaphysical realities or assumptions are thus required to round off the dominion proper of reason and science. And we should also remember that all our boasted intellectual advance is as nothing in regard to them. They now stand and have always stood, outside the pale of what we ordinarily understand by the term knowledge. The blaze of intellectual light that has grown in intensity and depth with the progress of civilization has been strictly confined to this side of the impenetrable veil drawn over metaphysical entities. All that reason has done in regard to what lies or may lie outside the range of sense-perception is only this—the declaration that it is unreachable by sense and that it is hence unknowable. Of what lies thus beyond the reach of reason, even existence, it may be thought, cannot be rightly predicated. But Spencer and Huxley, while confessing to the impotency of reason to penetrate into the recesses of the eternal realities of the universe, will not yet

push their agnosticism so far as to deny even their reality. "Though as knowledge approaches its culmination" says Spencer, "every unaccountable and seemingly supernatural fact is brought into the category of facts that are accountable and natural; yet, at the same time, all accountable and natural facts are proved in their ultimate genesis unaccountable and supernatural."

Now philosophy ventures to pry into what is thus screened off from our empirical vision. The empiricist resolves all knowledge into sensations, and this leads him logically to agnosticism. If we accept that our knowledge is limited to what is revealed to our mind in its commerce with the external world; if we confine our vision, as the empiricists do, to the knowable revealed to the preceiving mind through the agency of the senses, then indeed should we declare that the ultra-sensual region claimed as its peculiar sphere by metaphysics is impassably shut off from us; agnosticism proclaims this and this alone; its dogma is that the sphere of knowledge is limited to the world of sense-perception; and that non-knowledge or ignorance is the right frame of mind in regard to what lies or may lie beyond that world of sense-perception. But there is one important fact that empiricism seems to ignore. Science under its guidance has brought or tries to bring within its sphere, the whole range of phenomena, physical and psychical. And its grasp of the physical half of the phenomenal cosmos is thorough-going and secure; but its work in regard to the other half of its subject-matter—the psychical, is not equally exhaustive. It does not seem to have even a comprehension of the whole range of psychical phenomena. And it is exactly that portion of these phenomena which it ignores, or of which its view is half-hearted and halting, that is of the utmost importance to man.

Among the phenomena most characteristic of man are his religious convictions and beliefs. These with his ideas regarding his moral responsibility fill no small space of his life. In no country and in respect of no nation can it be said that these phenomena relating to religion and morality are insignificant or that they are unimportant. They occupy not only much of the time and attention of all nations, including those who are the most civilised, but exercise also a considerable amount of influence over their conduct through life, as sons, fathers, citizens, &c. It should not be supposed that in modern times the influence of religion has waned. It may be that the fire of the Inquisition and the slaughter of the Crusades have disappeared; and in India the cruel pike may have forgotten its function. Our age has learnt to be tolerant in matters of religion, but not thereby to lose sight of the existence of a craving for something other than empiricism and its teachings. These moral and religious phenomena have changed their form of external manifestation, but their springs in our innermost nature yet run fresh and full. And these inherent tendencies that draw us towards the supersensual now act mainly upon the ethical side of our nature. Their force is now as strong as ever, but it is felt mostly in the shaping of our social deportment. The extended vision of modern times has served to extend the sphere as well of our ethical sympathies.

Now it is this side of our nature, these religio-ethical phenomena so strikingly present in us and so potent over our feelings and actions, that modern empiricism has failed adequately to grapple with. If science is to take under its wings the whole range of phenomena falling within our observation, the neglect by it of these is by no means justifiable. It is not a scientific explanation of the ethic

side of man simply to state its psychological origin and development. Our conscience may have come into existence in the particular manner described by the empirical moralists; our religious instincts and beliefs may have been developed out of some of the primitive elements in our nature as the sociologists assert. But the question of their growth is not the question of their authority. And there is the further question of the nature and origin of those primitive instincts themselves from which our notions on religion and ethics are said to have sprung up. It is here that modern science has failed in its mission; and it is exactly here that the metaphysician comes in with his ultra-physical data to emancipate the Scientific Reason which stands entangled in the meshes of First Principles and primitive instincts.

It should not be supposed that in going back to the Vedic times of India for a solution of these metaphysical problems, we are seeking refuge in darkness from light. The thoughts of our ancients have lost none of their wisdom and weight because of their antiquity. It is not simply because, as has been pointed out above, these thoughts refer to a department of our nature on which modern science has not and cannot shed any light that was not within the reach of the ancient sages. This is true no doubt. But there is a stronger reason for this search into the past than this mere lack of advance in metaphysics since the days of our Upanishads. It is that the sages of ancient India have brought to bear upon these questions an acuteness and strength of intellect which is surprising in itself and is almost unequalled even by the foremost of modern minds. You should not suppose that I am asserting a mythical impossibility in claiming for the ancient Indians a vigour of intellectual perception matchless in its

degree. There has been immense progress, indeed, since their time. But this progress has not been in the perspicuity of intellectual comprehension. "The secrets of the universe have indeed been plumbed, and with the knowledge so obtained, man has turned the world into a vast workshop where all the powers of nature work submissively in bondage to supply his wants." The almost universal tendency has been to regard the intellectual factor as the ruling and dominant one in the advance made by modern nations. But quite recently attention has been directed to a comparison of the average intellectual development in the old civilizations, with the average mental development under modern civilization; and the result of this comparison is found to be against the latter. Although Western civilization of recent centuries has "developed a strength, a magnificence and an undoubted promise which overshadows the fame and the achievement" of the civilizations of ancient Greece and Rome, "the fuller knowledge and the more accurate methods of research and examination of our own time," says Mr. Benjamin Kidd, "have only tended to confirm the view, that in average mental development the moderns are not the superiors, but the inferiors of those ancient people who have so completely dropped out of the human struggle for existence. Judged by the standard of intellectual development alone, we of the modern European races who seem to have been so unmistakable marked out by the operation of the law of natural selection to play a commanding part in the history of the world, have, in fact no claim whatever to consider ourselves as in advance of ancient Greeks, all the extraordinary progress and prowess of the modern world notwithstanding. The marvellous accomplishments of modern civilization are not the colossal products of individual minds

amongst us: they are all the results of small accumulations of knowledge slowly and painfully made and added to by many minds through an indefinite number of generations in the past, every addition to this store of knowledge affording still greater facilities for further additions. It must not be assumed, even of the minds that have from time to time made considerable additions to this common stock of accumulated knowledge, that they have been separated from the general average or from the minds of other races of men of lower social development, by the immense intellectual interval which each achievement standing by itself would seem to imply." The great strides of modern civilization have been the products of the time rather than of individuals. Even those nations which are generally styled the lower races do not appear to be lower than the so-called higher races in point of mere intellectual power. This applies to the Maories of New Zealand as much as to the natives of this country. Of our countrymen, Mr. Benjamin Kidd, from whose remarkable book on Social Evolution I have already quoted, says: "These natives have proved themselves the rivals of Europeans in European branches of learning. Indian and Burmese students who have come to England to be trained for the legal and other professions have proved themselves not the inferiors of their European colleagues; and they have, from time to time, equalled and even surpassed the best English students against whom they have been matched."

If this be the verdict of modern science even in regard to the degenerate race now inhabiting India, degenerate through centuries of Moslem invasions and anarchy, what necessity is there to press the argument in favour of the intellectual greatness of the ancient authors of Indian metaphysics ? And as in the region of ultra-sensuous per-

ception modern researches have proved inefficient and ineffectual, and as in consequence the perception of truth depends necessarily upon our innate powers, it stands to reason that the philosophical thoughts of the ancients, endowed as they were with an extraordinary acuteness of mental vision, may be studied to advantage even after the lapse of so many centuries.

What is this philosophy and this metaphysics to which so much importance is here attached? This high estimate of its value should not be imagined to be due, in any the least extent, to the unconscious predilection in us for what belongs to our country. Oriental scholars enjoying a wide reputation and accepted as undoubted authorities on the subject are unanimous in their praise of the Vedanta as a philosophy. Professor Max Muller's views on the subject are too well-known to need repetition here. In his lectures on the Vedanta he says, for instance: "Such speculations are apt to make us feel giddy; but whatever we may think about them they show at all events to what a height Indian philosophy had risen in its patient climb from peak to peak, and how strong its lungs must have been to be able to breathe in such an atmosphere." "The system of the Vedanta," says Professor Deussen. 'as founded upon the Upanishads and Vedanta Sutras and accompanied by Sankara's Commentaries upon them,—equal in rank to Plato and Kant—is one of the most valuable products of the genius of mankind in its search for the eternal truth.' And it is not too much to claim the right at least to a respectful hearing for that which has evoked such feelings from European savants.

As a philosophy the Vedanta inquires into the ultimate bases of phenomena. We interpret the material world and the world of mind, so mysteriously joined to our

bodies, through our sense impressions. Matter is to us coloured; its sounds are caught by our ears; we perceive its surface as hot or cold, rough or smooth, plane or spherical; and we enjoy its smell and tastes. The forces that sway matter, both molar and molecular, we ponder and study. In these and other ways we grapple with the material world with the senses as our instruments, and it is through these alone that we can reach that world. Now the question arises as to the existence of a something behind these attributes, as the substratum, of which colours, sounds, smells, tastes, &c., are but appendages and belongings. This substratum, if it exists, cannot be known through sense-impressions. For then it will become a colour, a sound, a taste, &c, and thus will be brought down to the category of attributes. The Vedanta declares therefore that the eternal cannot be known through the transient. This eternal substratum of the world, not thus accessible to our senses, we yet believe to exist. We may go the whole way with the philosopher who would resolve all our knowledge into sensations; it may be a matter of rational conviction to us that what is inaccessible to the senses must necessarily be beyond the sphere of knowledge. And it is but reasonable to say that we are not entitled to speak of what is unknown and unknowable. Yet the conviction of the existence of a material is too strong to be got rid of by such arguments, cogent though they appear to be when looked at from the analytical point of view. It is insufficient to say that the mind has built up a world of its own from the materials supplied to it by the senses. The repeated experience of sensations by us in particular groups and in particular successions, it has been said, explains the growth in us of material objects and their orderly arrangement. But

whence this possibility of experiencing them repeatedly? Why should the same group of sensations recur to us and to others in any particular order or arrangement? Why this perdurability among the groups of number of sensations? A material object is not simply the summation of a number of sensations. These sensations are permanently bound up together into inseparable bundles. What is the explanation of this permanent bond among these attributes of matter? Is there a nucleus corresponding to our idea of matter around which these experienced attributes cohere? Or, is it the mere play of fancy to ascribe to them a permanency which does not belong to them.

Here is a question before which science along with reason stands discomfited and spell-bound; and in despair, it would destroy and deny what it cannot comprehend. The perceiving mind is no less mysterious than the perceived matter; and Nihilism has solved the mystery by destroying the former as well as the latter. The existence of these mysteries both in the sphere of sensations and in the external world does not in the least affect the practical concerns of life. The objects continue to be what they are and continue to serve the usual purposes of life even though we may be unable to comprehend their innermost texture. They may be but airy combinations of sensations, tangible to the muscular sense, coloured to the vision and so on. Or they may be substantial realities of which these attributes are only the outside varnish. So also in regard to our minds. There may be nothing in the background of our consciousness corresponding to our notion of mind and self. The I of our conviction may be an illusion built on no logical basis. The fleeting experiences of the mind' have, it is true, a bond of union, which bond is a mystery unsolved by sense-experience and rationalism. Here also

what is insoluble has been destroyed and the Gordian Knot has been cut by an easy process. But these ghosts of a material world and a mental world cannot be so readily allayed. Nor can we rest satisfied even with a simple negation of the possibility of knowing them. The Vedantic philosophy fully recognizes this element of permanency in our psychological structure of a material world and of a mental world. To the knowledge of these two departments of experience resolvable into sensations, we have to add the notion of permanency. The attributes of matter are permanently bundled up together in various ways; and so also the attributes of mind. And whatever explanation may be attempted of this notion of permanency as due to variations in our experiences, such an explanation cannot do away with the fact. A residuum there is, all must admit, which sensations do not and cannot account for; and of this residuum Western philosophy does not seem to have attained to a clear vision. It has either to rest contented with the assumption of a gross material world as present to our ordinary vision or it has destroyed it completely. It has not sifted its contents with care and laid firm hold of their ultimate meaning. Even Mill, whose analysis of matter is so striking and acute, did not see that the permanency or perdurability which he asserted as the residual factor both in his analysis of matter and of mind, required a fuller recognition as an ultimate element in the philosophy of perception than he was willing to accord to it. This element of permanency in the material world of perception and in the mental world of self-consciousness is set up as an ultimate fact of philosophical analysis by the Vedantins; and they call it *Mula prakriti* or *Maya*. The term *Maya* has no doubt come to mean *illusion*; but this was not its meaning in the text of the Vedanta as originally

expounded. The word *Maya* occurs but very rarely in the Vedas; and it means in them not illusion, but Divine power. The same is true of the significance of the term in the few passages of the Upanishads where it is used. When the Lord is said in the Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad to appear as multiform through the *Mayas*, the reference is clearly to His creative *Sakti*. The Lord is represented as careering rapidly through the appearances of the world with "the horses yoked." The mind has the horses or the senses under its control; and with these yoked or controlled horses, it proceeds to its work of creative knowledge. But in the ultimate analysis, the horses, the world and all resolve themselves into the Brahman. "This Atman is the horses, this is the ten, and the thousands, many and endless." In the Svetasvetara-Upanishad, it is said that "the sages, devoted to meditation and concentration, have seen the power belonging to God Himself." The sages "meditate on the river whose water consists of the five streams, which is wild and winding with its five springs whose names are the five vital breaths, whose fountain-head is the mind, the course of the five kinds of perception." The five streams here referred to are the five percipient senses which wind about the material structure of the world; and the river of the phenomenal runs along the course of mental perceptions. It will be seen that here again the idea of illusion is entirely absent. And when the student is called upon to identify *Prakriti* or nature with *Maya* in the same Upanishad and the Lord is spoken of as the *Mayin*, the reference is, as Professor Max Muller observes, only to the creative power of the Lord.

The Vedanta corrects the popular notion of the material world and contends that it has no essence independent of mental perception—a contention which is amply sustain-

-ed by modern science. That material existence is to us known only as perception is a doctrine of the Vedanta, as it is a doctrine of the modern theory of knowledge. The former is perhaps more emphatic in maintaining the unreliable character of sensations and appearances—unreliable as implying anything more than what they are, as contrasted with noumenal realities—a doctrine that has the full support of modern psychology. To revert to the Vedantic doctrine of Maya. Now this Maya is the Sakti or power of God and is *Anadi*—beginningless. It is divine in its origin but is not eternal, for it may come to an end. Reserving this latter aspect of the question for the present, the significance of the statements that *Maya* or *Sakti* is Divine and that it has endured from the beginning should be attended to. We found that beyond and behind the phenomena of perception, underlying the attributes or bundles of possibilities of sensations, constituting the objects of the material world, there is the important fact of their permanency. Sensations viewed as elements in our experience are fleeting; one sensation follows another in rapid succession and no one sensation endures continuously for any appreciable period of time. But when these same sensations are projected out of the mind into the external, they are viewed to be the attributes of material objects or in philosophical language, as bundles of sensations—they lose their fleeting character and acquire the opposite characteristic of permanency. It is this that requires a full recognition and explanation. And we claim for the Vedanta the clearness of analytical vision to have recognised this residual element in our experience after making the fullest allowance for the fleeting sensations in which it is embodied. Through our consciousness, whether centred in self or directed out of it, there runs in

a perpetual current this conviction of perdurability; and the philosopher has therefore to fix his attention on this and to take its bearings as an element of the universe. The Vedantin declares it to be a power of Brahman, that is, he declares that it is an ultimate fact. Whether this declaration amounts to a confession of his ignorance of the ultimate nature of this fact or whether we can clothe this statement with a realizable significance is another question. But we need not seriously object even to the former alternative, for we may then seek refuge in the observation of Professor Max Muller that

> there is a point in every system of philosophy where a confession of ignorance is inevitable and all the greatest philosophers have had to confess that there are limits to our understanding the world; nay, this knowledge of the limits of our understanding has, since Kant's Criticism of Pure Reason, become the very foundation of all critical philosophy.

The doctrine of Maya is the Vedantin's view of cosmogony; Brahman, the supreme, is associated with a certain power called Maya or *Avidya* to which the appearance of this universe is due. Why is this power called by such names as Maya, nescience, ignorance, illusion? It is because, in the view of the Vedantin, this power and its effect, that is the world and its belongings, stand in the way of our reaching to a knowledge of the ultimate truth. Now knowledge is either of phenomena or of noumena. And engrossed in the former we are unable to rise to a knowledge of the latter; and as a knowledge of the eternal realities affects our destinies most intimately, whatever operates to screen them off from us must be viewed as darkness keeping us away from light. Remember that science in its soberest form has made no declaration hostile to metaphysics; and God has yet a place in the universe. If so, a knowledge of God, of the relation that subsists between Him and ourselves, and also of His relation to the

material universe ought to be admitted to be indispensable, or at least desirable. And if the phenomenal knowledge that comes to us through the senses tends to withdraw us from the search for the underlying principles of existence, we may well term this phenomenal knowledge *avidya*—ignorance, not because it is valueless in itself, but because of its self-centering hostility to the higher kind of knowedge. The Vedantin confines his attention to the highest problems of life; and views with disfavour whatever tends to obscure the philosophic vision. And the phenomenal has this tendency, and receives hence such names as *avidya*, illusion, &c. These names have given offence to many, both in this country and elsewhere, but it will be seen that they have done so without reason. For in the first place we must allow that the problems of metaphysics have important bearings on human life. If our life time here is but an instant in the eternity that belongs to us, if in consequence our temporal concerns are as nothing in the balance when weighed with our concerns in the hereafter, if these premises, in no way rejected even by agnosticism, be granted, then indeed it follows indisputably that the problems of the future have a higher value than those of the present. This absolute superiority, if once admitted, justifies fully the language adopted by the Vedantin in respect of the material concerns of life. These concerns are paramount, it is true, to physical science and to us as denizens on this earth. Science endeavours to make the best of the present; and it is but just and proper that it should do so. But that is no reason why we should forget that the concerns of science are after all subordinate to the higher concerns of philosophy. Children when engaged in their engrossing pastimes may not have the remotest glimpse of the serious problems of

life that await them in the future, and yet the latter are more important than the former. And we should not quarrel with children for securing the utmost pleasure from their pastimes while engaged in them. The same applies to the relation between philosophy and science. The latter engrossing as it is and, we may say, engrossing as it ought to be, has yet to yield to the other in intrinsic worth; and may be called *Avidya Maya*, in comparison. To show that the statement, that even agnostic science has not brought its good sense into peril by a complete negation of metaphysics, is not gratuitous, permit me to refer to a remarkable passage in the writings of Huxley:

"The student of nature, who starts from the axiom of the universality of the law of causation, cannot refuse to admit an eternal existence; if he admits the conservation of energy, if he admits the existence of immaterial phenomena in the form of consiousness, he must admit the possibility, at any rate, of an eternal series of such phenomena; and, if his studies have not been barren of the best fruit of the investigation of nature, he will have enough sense to see that when Spinoza says, 'by God we understand an absolute infinite Being, that is an unchangeable Essence, with infinite attributes,' the God so conceived is one that only a very great fool would deny, even in his heart. Physical science is as little Atheistic as it is Materialistic."

The material world then is a recognised reality and has its origin in Brahman. The Vedantin admits the knowledge of perception to be right knowledge, but such only in its relation to this world and its concerns. But this knowledge and these worldly concerns he distinguishes from the knowledge of philosophy, of God, creation, &c. This latter knowledge is possible to man, in his view. But

to reach it, he must not forget the fact of the existence of the verities of philosophy foreshadowed even in perceptual knowledge. We have already said that these abet us on every side even in our dealings with phenomenal appearances. This recognition of their existence as distinguished from the knowledge of their manifestations and effects, is the first step in the process that is to lead us up to a knowledge of Brahman. But this recognition is not sufficient by itself for the successful arrival at the final goal. When standing on this side of the vestibule of God, when studying the multiplex manifestations of the complex machine of the universe from the outside, hardly able to enter into its revolving wheels and flying bells, the true spirit of scientific investigation would have felt the insignificance of the inquirer in the presence of the vast conglomeration of energising matter. The man of science may then say with the poet, that he feels,

> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean, and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man.

If this be the right frame of mind even in regard to the inquiry into the material manifestations of God's Maya, what should be the preparation of mind required to render us fit to approach nearer to the throne of the Eternal? The Vedantin rightly insists upon renunciation, tranquillity, self-restraint, and *sraddha* or faith, as the necessary conditions antecedent to the commencement of the inquiry into Brahman. For what is it that he is in quest of? It is not the phenomena of the world which he should observe and examine and dissect with vigilant eyes. It is not simply an enumeration, nor even a classification and analysis of his mental phenomena. This world is the

world of action; and in it alone is there room for the play of the senses. If we would get at the truths which lie beyond and behind it, we must suppress our action and suppress our senses. However valuable these are when dealing with the world and its phenomena, though their work as mind builders should also be recognised, yet when we go to dissect the contents of the mind, our senses and activities are hindrances and not helps in our researches. Even Professor Max Muller fails to grasp the full import of the logic of the Vedanta when he says that "the object of the Vedanta was to show that we have really nothing to conquer but ourselves, that we possess everything within us, and that nothing is required but to shut our eyes and our hearts against the illusion of the world in order to find ourselves richer than heaven and earth." It is true that the search for the truths of the Vedanta must be into ourselves, and that we must shut our eyes and hearts if we would engage in that search undisturbed by them. But the riches higher than those of heaven which our Self is to reveal, is not to be the exclusive result of this shutting up of our eyes and hearts; nor should it be said that the Vedantin requires every individual among us to stand unaffected by his sense organs and by his sentiments and emotions. If your seek communion with the Brahman enthroned on your inner Self, you should approach Him with singleness of purpose and exclusive devotion. The Vedanta is jealous of rivals and would stand alone in the intellectual embrace of its devotee. To understand God, to comprehend the process of creation, the nature of the human soul and its past life and future destiny, the Self must be grasped in its entirety and in its inmost nature; and to do this the student must abnegate whatever is calculated to disturb him in his absorbing subjectivity. The tranquillity, mis-

named apathy and quietism, is this indispensable imperturbability by external calls without which the mind cannot possibly soar up the peaks of the Vedanta. This is not any dreamy imagination that the Hindu mind specially indulges in; it is no indication of any absence of a genius for system and order in the Hindu intellect; nor is it the hurling of thought "as a venture into the nature of metaphysical conceptions." It is the only path open for man to win what knowledge he can of the realities that ever elude the grasp of the unthinking mind. The Vedanta ignores the phenomenal, not because the phenomenal is unimportant, but because it is beyond the special sphere of investigation which it marks out for itself; it is subjective, because by being subjective alone can it accomplish its task; and it would forget the world and withdraw the mind from all temporal calls, as then alone there is a chance of man reaching to a knowledge of its teaching.

The Vedanta requires:—

That blessed mood
In which the burthen and the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world
Is lightened; that serene and blessed mood
In which the affections gently lead us on,
Until the breath of this corporeal frame,
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.

The mind, thus withdrawn from the phenomenal and also from the cravings of the body with which it stands associated, should approach the question of the Vedanta in a spirit of true faith and devotion, and not in that of cavil. The faith here insisted upon may be said to stand at the

basis of all religions; and the Vedanta does not stand alone in this respect. But it is no blind faith that is demanded of the student. In that case, there is no room for enquiry or for conviction or knowledge. The demand is negative rather than positive. The Vedanta will have no determined atheist as its disciple, but demands that the inquiring mind should approach it in a spirit of meek reverence. Reason should be the guide, but not the tyrant of the philosopher. "There is so little which Reason, divested of all emotional and instinctive supports, is able to prove to our satisfaction that a sceptical aridity is likely to take possession of the soul." The mental mood should not be that described by Wordsworth in the following lines:—

> Till, demanding formal proof
> And seeking it in everything, I lost
> All feeling of conviction; and, in fine,
> Sick, wearied out of contrarieties,
> Yielded up moral question in despair.

"In this mood all those great generalised conceptions which are the food of our love, our reverence, our religion, dissolve away,"

I said above that the Vedanta demands faith from its disciple. It is only when the student goes to the subject with faith that his eyes open into the vista of divine truth: "A man who is free from desires and free from grief," says the Katha Upanishad, "sees the majesty of Self by the grace of the Creator. The Self cannot be gained by the Veda, nor by understanding, nor by much learning. He whom the Self chooses, by him the Self can be gained."

Few there are who feel an inclination for such inquiries; and of these but few understand what they are about. We all know that death is the portion of us all. But how many even of those brought to its very doors can bring

themselves to attend to its significance? In the heyday of life, when the blood leaps along our veins, it is but excusable, nay it is reasonable, that we should make the most of the world for which we are then best adapted. That is then our duty to ourselves and to the past and the future generations. But when the best part of our worldly mission is over, when we have contributed our mite to the smooth flow of life amidst its rugged paths, it is but natural that the phenomenal should loosen its hold upon us and allow us at times at least to look at the fundamental facts of the universe. It no doubt occasionally happens that this philosophic mood comes upon us unexpectedly even when young, as was the case with Nachiketas, of whom it is said that "faith entered into his heart," even when he was a boy.

The faith that we here speak of is not subversive of reason and it is viewed only as a frame of mind that is to lead us up to knowledge. Knowledge, not faith, is according to the generally accepted doctrine, the ultimate requisite for the true comprehension of the Brahman. The Brahman who is "hidden in all beings," that is, who is to be revealed to our vision only by a deep search into our own innermost heart, is seen "by subtle seers through their sharp and subtle intellect." Where the Brahman is not "the sun does not shine, nor the moon and the stars nor these lightnings, much less this fire." If He is such that "when He shines, everything shines after Him; by His light all is lighted," how can we apprehend Him but by the light of grace and knowledge shed by Himself on our minds?

I cannot within the short compass of a lecture explain even if I had the necessary ability and knowledge, the doctrines of the Vedanta, regarding the nature of the

Paramatman, the nature of the Jiva, of its life in this world and of its passage to the next, and the other connected questions. I have endeavoured only to offer some reasons to show that the Vedanta deserves our careful attention and that one may set down those dabblers in philosophy who will speak of it in a spirit of supercilious contempt, as persons who have no claim whatever to approach the subject. The Vedanta which gives us a knowledge of the true God, which preaches "as with a voice of thunder" the virtues of self-denial, charity and universal benevolence, which induced powerful sovereigns among us to descend from their thrones and abandon their palaces to mediate in solitary forests on its problems and teachings, and which promises immortality as the final outcome of its knowledge, can this be to the thinking mind a subject for contempt or ridicule. "In the world of nature to reveal things hidden, to sanctify things common, to interpret new and unsuspected relations, to open a new sense in man; in the moral world, to teach truths hitherto neglected or unobserved, to awaken men's hearts to the solemnities that encompass them, to deepen our reverence for the essential Soul, to make us feel more truly, more tenderly, more profoundly, to lift the thoughts upward through the shows of time to that which is permanent and eternal, and to bring down on the transitory things of eye and ear some shadow of the eternal, till we :—

> 'feel through all this flushy dress
> Bright shoots of everlastingness'—

this is the office" which the Vedanta shall not cease to perform as long as it is approached in the proper spirit. We may say of the Vedanta what the critic has said of the poetry of Wordsworth, that "the more thoughtful of each generation will draw nearer and observe it more closely,

will ascend its imaginative heights, and sit under the shadow of its profound meditations, and in proportion as they do so, will become more noble and pure in heart." I feel no hesitation therefore in closing these observations with the appeal addressed to us Hindus by a foreign admirer of the Vedanta :

"So the Vedanta, in its unfalsified form, is the strongest support of pure morality, is the greatest consolation in the sufferings of life and death,—Indians, keep to it!"

VEDA AND THE VEDANTA.*

BY PROF. MAX MULLER.

TO the present day India acknowledges no higher authority in matters of religion, ceremonial, customs and law than the *Veda*, and so long as India is India, nothing will extinguish that ancient spirit of Vedantism which is breathed by every Hindu from his earliest youth, and pervades, in various forms, the prayers even of the idolater, the speculations of the philosopher, and the proverbs of the beggar.

For purely practical reasons therefore,—I mean for the very practical object of knowing something of the secret springs which determine the character, the thoughts and deeds, of the lowest as well as of the highest amongst the people in India,—an acquaintance with their religion, which is founded on the Veda, and with their philosophy, which is founded on the Vedanta, is highly desirable.

It is easy to make light of this, and to ask, as some statesmen have asked, even in Europe, What has religion, or what has philosophy, to do with politics? In India, in spite of all appearances to the contrary, and notwithstanding the indifference on religious matters so often paraded before the world by the Indians themselves, religion, and philosophy too, are great powers still. Read the account that has lately been published of two native statesmen, the administrators of two first class states in Sourashtra, Junagadh and Bhavnagar, Gokulaji and

* From "India: What can it teach us?"

Gaurisankara*, and you will see whether the Vedanta is still a moral and a political power in India or not.

But I claim even more for the Vedanta, and I recommend its study, not only to the candidates for the Indian Civil Service, but to all true students of philosophy. It will bring before them a view of life, different from all other views of life which are placed before us in the History of Philosophy. You saw how behind all the Devas or gods, the authors of the Upanishads discovered the Atman or Self. Of that Self they predicated three things only, that it is, that it perceives, and that it enjoys eternal bliss. All other predicates were negative: it is not this, it is not that—it is beyond anything that we can conceive or name.

But that Self, that Highest Self, the Paramatman, could be discovered after a severe moral and intellectual discipline only, and those who had not yet discovered it, were allowed to worship lower gods, and to employ more poetical names to satisfy their human wants. Those who

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* Life and Letters of Gokulaji Sampattirama Zala and his views of the Vedanta, by Mannassukharama Suryarama Tripathi, Bombay, 1881.

As a young man Gokulaji, the son of a good family, learnt Persian and Sanskrit. His chief interest in life, in the midst of a most successful political career, was the 'Vedanta.' A little insight, we are told, into this knowledge turned his heart to higher objects, promising him freedom from grief, and blessedness, the highest aim of all. This was the turning point of his inner life. When the celebrated Vedantic anchorite, Rama Bava visited Junagadh, Gokulaji became his pupil. When another anchorite, Paramahamsa Sakkidananda, passed through Junagadh on a pilgrimage to Girnar, Gokulaji was regularly initiated in the secrets of the Vedanta. He soon became highly proficient in it, and through the whole course of his life, whether in power or in disgrace, his belief in the doctrines of the Vedanta supported him, and made him, in the opinion of English statesmen, the model of what a native statesman ought to be.

knew the other gods to be but names or persons—*personas* or masks, in the true sense of the world—pratikas, as they call them in Sanskrit—knew also that those who worshipped these names or persons, worshipped in truth the Highest Self, though ignorantly. This is the most characteristic feature in the religious history of India. Even in the Bhagavadgita, a rather popular and exoteric exposition of Vedantic doctrines, the Supreme Lord or Bhagavan himself is introduced as saying: 'Even those who worship idols, worship me*.'

But that was not all. As behind the names of Agni, Indra, and Prajapati, and behind all the mythology of nature, the ancient sages of India had discovered the Atman—let us call it the objective Self—they perceived also behind the veil of the body, behind the senses, behind the mind, and behind our reason (in fact behind the mythology of the soul, which we often call psychology), another Atman, or the subjective Self. That Self, too, was to be discovered by a severe moral and intellectual discipline only, and those who wished to find it, who wished to know, not themselves, but their Self, had to cut far deeper than the senses, or the mind, or the reason, or the ordinary Ego.

* Professor Kunen discovers a similar idea in the word placed in the mouth of Jehovah by the prophet Malachi, i. 14' 'For I am great King, and my name is feared among the heathens. 'The reference,' he says, 'is distinctly to the adoration already offered to Yahweh by the people, whenever they serve their own gods with true reverence and honest zeal. Even in Deuteronomy the adoration of these other gods by the nations is represented as a dispensation of Yahweh. Malachi goes a step further, and accepts their worship as a tribute which in reality falls to Yahweh,—to Him, the Only True. Thus the opposition between Yahweh and the other gods, and afterwards between the one true God and the imaginary gods, makes room here for the still higher conception that the adoration of Yahweh is the essence and the truth of all religion.' Hibbert Lectures, p. 181.

All these too were mere Devas, bright apparitions—mere names—yet names meant for something. Much that was most dear, that had seemed for a time their very self, had to be surrendered, before they could find the Self of Selves, the Old Man, the Looker-on, a subject independent of all personality, an existence independent of all life.

When that point had been reached, then the highest knowledge began to dawn, the Self within (the Pratyag-atman) was drawn towards the Highest Self, (the Paramatman), it found its true self in the Highest Self, and the oneness of the subjective with the objective Self was recognised as underlying all reality, as the dim dream of religion,—as the pure light of philosophy.

This fundamental idea is worked out with systematic completeness in the Vedanta philosophy, and no one who can appreciate the lessons contained in Berkeley's philosophy, will read the Upanishads and the Brahma-Sutras and their commentaries without feeling a richer and a wiser man.

I admit that it requires patience, descrimination, and a certain amount of self-denial before we can discover the grains of solid gold in the dark mines of Eastern philosophy. It is far easier and far more amusing for shallow critics to point out what is absurd and ridiculous in the religion and philosophy of the ancient world than for the earnest student to discover truth and wisdom under strange disguises. Some progress, however, has been made, even during the short span of life that we can remember. The Sacred Books of the East are no longer a mere butt for the invectives of missionaries or the sarcasms of philosophers. They have at last been recognised as historical documents, aye, as the most ancient documents in the history of the human mind, and as palæontological records

of an evolution that begins to elicit wider and deeper sympathies than the nebular formation of the planet on which we dwell for a season, or the organic development of that chrysalis which we call man.

If you think that I exaggerate, let me read you in conclusion what one of the greatest philosophical critics—and certainly not a man given to admiring the thoughts of others—says of the Vedanta, and more particularly of the Upanishads. Schopenhauer writes:

'In the whole world there is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Upanishads. It has been the solace of my life—it will be the solace of my death.'*

I have thus, tried, so far as it was possible in one course of lectures, to give you some idea of ancient India, of its ancient literature, and, more particularly, of its ancient religion. My object was, not merely to place names and facts before you, these you can find in many published books, but, if possible, to make you see and feel the general human interests that are involved in that ancient chapter of the history of the human race. I wished that the Veda and its religion and philosophy should not only seem to you curious or strange, but that you should feel that there was in them something that concerns ourselves, something of our own intellectual growth, some recollections, as it were, of our own childhood, or at least of the childhood of our own race. I feel convinced that, placed as we are here in this life, we have lessons to learn from the Veda, quite as important as the lessons we learn at school from Homer and Virgil, and lessons from the Vedanta quite as instructive as the systems of Plato or Spinoza.

* Sacred Books of the East, vol. i. The Upanishads, translated by Max Muller; Introduction, p. lxi.

I do not mean to say that everybody who wishes to know how the human race came to be what it is, how language came to be what it is, how religion came to be what it is, how manners, customs, laws, and forms of government came to be what they are, how we ourselves came to be what we are, must learn Sanskrit, and must study Vedic Sanskrit. But I *do* believe that not to know what a study of Sanskrit, and particularly a study of the Veda, has already done for illuminating the darkest passage in the history of the human mind, of that mind on which we ourselves are feeding and living, is a misfortune, or, at all events, a loss, just as I should count it a loss to have passed through life without knowing something, however little, of the earth and its geological formation, of the movements of the sun, the moon, and the stars,—and of the thought, or the will, or the law, that governs these movements.

VEDANTA TOWARD ALL RELIGIONS.*

BY SWAMI ABHEDANANDA.

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HUNDREDS of educated men and women of this country have found in the Vedanta the true foundation of an absolutely unsectarian universal religion which has neither dogma nor creed of any kind, which embraces all the special religions, such as Christianity, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Mahomedanism, Brahminism, and like a thread strings them together into a garland of flowers, variegated in their colour and size. Like an impartial judge, the religion of the Vedanta gives the proper place to each of these sectarian religions in the grand evolution of the spiritual thoughts and systems of the world. Having no particular founder, it stands upon the eternal, spiritual laws that have been discovered by various sages and seers of truth of all countries and of all ages and which have been described in the different Scriptures of the world. Those who have studied the religion of the Vedanta in its various aspects have found the spiritual laws which are given in all the different Scriptures. For them it is not necessary to study the Vedas of the Hindus, the Tripitakas of the Buddhists, the Zend Avesta of the Parsees, the Old Testament of the Jews, the Bible of the Christians and the Koran of the Mahomedans in order to understand those spiritual laws, because they can find the essential points, the moral and spiritual laws that govern our lives, through the study of Vedanta. It is not

* A lecture delivered in America.

necessary if they can only understand this central point, that truth is universal. If there be any spiritual law, that must be universal and must pervade all the Scriptures of the world. Then there is no difficulty—everything will appear to us as simple. Furthermore, the students of the Vedanta find in this religion the ultimate conclusions of the greatest scientific thinkers of the world. It includes all the scientific truths. The religion of the Vedanta therefore is extremely comforting for those who have outgrown the doctrines and dogmas of special religions, and I can assure you that it has brought the greatest comfort and consolation into the lives of those who are earnest and sincere seekers after truth.

The religion of the Vedanta is like a huge structure, the foundation of which is laid, not upon the quicksand of the authority of any particular book or personality, but upon the solid rock of logical and scientific reasoning, and the walls of which are not made up of the clay of superstitious dogmas, but are built with the stones of spiritual experiences, placed one upon another by the artistic hands of the great seers of truth of ancient and modern times. The roof of this superb structure is not confined within the celestial domain of the anthropomorphic God of a personal religion, but it extends beyond all the heavens of different religions, and, rising above all the various planes of relativity, reaches that infinite and eternal abode of being, intelligence, love and everlasting bliss. The gates of this magnificent palace are guarded, not by zealots and fanatics who carry destructive weapons in their hands to prevent the entrance of other sectarians, but by sincerity and earnestness standing like sentinels to welcome with open arms all those who are sincere and earnest seekers after truth, spiritual life and God-consciousness, irrespective of

their creed, nationality or religious conviction. There are many storeys in that palatial building, three of which are of great importance. The first floor is for the monotheists, or those who believe in the existence of one personal God whom they worship under a particular name and a particular form. Here is the place for all the monotheistic believers and worshippers in Judaism, Christianity, Mahomedanism, Zoroastrianism, Lamaism, Brahminism and Theistic Buddhism, with their various sects and denominations. Here are to be found all the doctrines, dogmas, rituals, ceremonials and symbols that are described in these particular religions, The second storey is for those who have outgrown all ritualism, ceremonialism, symbolism and the worship of a God with a particular name and a particular form. It is for those who have understood that God is not far from us, dwelling in a heaven somewhere above the clouds, but that God dwells in nature; He is immanent and resident in nature. He is not far away, but He is here, He is the soul of our souls, He is the life of our life; "in Him we live and move and have our being." Those who feel this and those who realise that we are children of God, that our souls are parts of that one stupendous whole, the Infinite Being, worship on the second floor of this superb structure of the religion of Vedanta.

The God of the Vedanta is personal, yet He is not confined to any particular personality. He is impersonal, also he is above personal and impersonal, beyond both. You cannot confine God by giving Him any particular personality. If you think that He is sitting on a throne somewhere, with two hands,—that will limit Him. That is a phase, but there are other phases. The God of the Vedanta has many names and many aspects, and these aspects and these names are recognised by the different religions of the world. He

is the same Being, but has many names. He has no particular form, yet He assumes many forms in order to satisfy the desires of earnest and sincere devotees; and to fulfil the prayers of the devotee He manifests Himself in that particular form to which the heart and the soul of the devotee are devoted. His personal aspect is worshipped under different names by different religions. The Christians worship Him as the Father in Heaven, the Mahomedans as Allah, the Zoroastrians call Him Ahura Mazda, the Brahmins give Him various names, the Buddhists call Him Buddha, the worshippers of the Divine Mother call Him the mother of the Universe. God is sexless and the moment we become sexless, we have become divine. He has no sex. Why should you call Him Father and give Him the masculine sex? Call him mother, masculine or feminine, there is no distinction of sex: therefore, He may be called Mother, Father, neuter, it does not make any difference. When you understand this central truth, there is no difference in the expression. But the personal God of the dualistic religions of Semitic origin is masculine, is Jehovah; the same Jehovah again is the Father in Heaven, is Allah, is Ahura Mazda.

The third storey of this structure is for those who have gone beyond all reality, who have transcended phenomenal existence, and who have reached that state of divine communion which manifests the eternal, absolute oneness of the Supreme Spirit. It is for those who realize the indivisible oneness of that Being. That Being cannot be divided into parts, but He is one stupendous whole, indivisible, finer than space; as space cannot be divided, so God cannot be divided into parts. That is the Absolute Spirit, the Infinite Being; It is called by various names. In Vedanta it is called Brahman, Paramahamsa or Over-Soul; but it is the same as the God of Plato, the *Substantia* of Spinoza,

the transcendental thing-in-itself (Ding an Sich) of Kant, the Will of Schopenhauer, the Unknown and Unknowable of Herbert Spencer, the Substance of Ernest Haeckel, the Science of Matter of the Materialists, the Real Entity or Spirit of the Spiritualists; It is also the same as Christ. Christ is this Being, this Universal Spirit Who is called by other names, and He is also Buddha. Buddha means that Eternal Wisdom, that Truth.

These different names are given by different philosophers, as also by different worshippers. These three phases of the Vedanta,—the dualistic, the qualified non-dualistic and the non-dualistic or monistic,—include all the sectarian religions of the world and impart the highest ideals given in all the Scriptures. What is the highest ideal given in the Scripture of the Christ, or of the Mahomedans, or of the Parsees? The worship of one God; that is the highest ideal. God is personal; He may have some form, He may have a particular name, but still He is one. That is the highest ideal. This you find in the dualistic phase of Vedanta. The Vedanta accepts that ideal, and therefore it embraces all the religions that I have just mentioned. As, on the one hand, the religions of the Vedanta embraces the special religions of the world, and the highest ideals of all the scriptures of the world, so on the other hand the philosophy of the Vedanta embraces the highest ideals and ultimate conclusions of the greatest scientists, the deepest philosophers, the profoundest thinkers and the best metaphysicians of the world; therefore this religion is truly universal. Its scope is unlimited and there is no other religion in the world which can be compared to it in its universality and its infinite scope.

The religion of the Vedanta is inseparable from true science and from true philosophy. Why? Because all

sciences and all philosophies are nothing but so many attempts of human minds to grasp some particular phase of the Eternal Truth, the Infinite Reality. As truth is the goal of all science and all philosophy, the same truth is the goal of the Vedanta; and, as Vedanta attempts to lead all human minds to the realization of that absolute truth of the oneness, so it embraces all the philosophies of the world. In particular doctrines, in particular arguments and discussions and particular points there may be diversity, but the ideal is one, and hence Professor Max Muller said that "the Vedanta is the most sublime of all philosophies and the most comforting of all religions." Why is this? Because it embraces the highest truths given in the philosophy of Plato, of Schopenhauer, of Hegel, Kant, Berkeley, Hume and others. For this reason we should call the religion and philosophy of the Vedanta absolutely unsectarian and universal. The follower of the Vedanta religion is a true Christian. He is a true Christian, but in spirit he is broader than a Christian. He is a true Mahomedan; also he is a true Buddhist, a true Brahmin, a true Hindu; he is a worshipper of truth. He honors and reveres all the great prophets and seers of truth of all countries, accepts their teachings and never fails to separate the essentials of religion from the nonessentials or the crystallized dogmas and doctrines of special religions. He does not belong to any sect or creed of any particular religion, yet in spirit he belongs to all sects and all creeds of all religions because he knows the spirit of all creeds, he understands the meaning of all sectarian doctrines and dogmas. He does not belong to any particular church or any particular temple, but all churches, all places of worship, all temples and mosques, are equally sacred, equally holy. To his all-embracing soul they are all equally great, and so he is able

to worship his ideal in a Catholic church or in a Mahomedan mosque. He is not limited. When he sits under a tree, he worships. He may not go to Church on Sunday, he may stay in the park under a tree and worship God in spirit. He feels that each individual soul is the temple wherein dwells the Eternal Being and He must be worshipped in spirit. That is a grand ideal.

The Vedanta accepts the teachings of the great prophets, like Moses, like Zoroaster, Jesus the Christ, Buddha, Confucius, Laotze and other great prophets and seers of truth who have arisen in other parts of the world, as well as those of India,—such as Krishna, Rama and others; it recognises Jesus the Christ as the Son of God, as the Incarnation of Divinity, but not as the only one. There have been many other incarnations and will be many in future. God is not limited to any particular tribe or particular nationality, or time, or place. Why should we limit Him? He is the Infinite Being, the Father of all nations. Wherever His manifestation is necessary, He will appear; He loves all mankind equally. He does not think that the Jews are His best friends, while others are heathens. No, they are all equal in His eyes. All nations are great before Him. We must not have any national prejudice on account of colour or particular mode of living. All are children of God.

The religion of the Vedanta recognizes spiritual growth and evolution in the path of realization. As in our physical body, there are different stages of growth,—like childhood, youth and maturity,—so in the spiritual life there is spiritual childhood, spiritual youth, spiritual maturity. One leads to the other, one merges into the other, and ultimately leads to God, to Realization. Spiritual childhood begins with the worship of ancestors or departed

spirits and ends with the conception of one extra-cosmic personal God, Who dwells outside of nature; that is the limit of spiritual childhood. All primitive religions began with ancestor-worship. In fact, ancestor-worship or spirit-worship was the foundation of all religions in primitive times. Modern spiritism or ancient ancestor-worship is only the beginning of spiritual childhood. In ancient times, when the people came to believe in departed spirits and felt that they had power over certain phenomena or control over certain conditions, they were frightened and they began to revere and honor those spirits. Gradually this gave rise to another conception,—that of still higher and more powerful spirits who had larger control over the phenomena of nature, and they called these tribal gods. They became nature Gods, and such tribal gods you will find amongst the different tribes of the ancient Jews, as amongst the tribes of ancient India, China, Japan and other countries. They are like chiefs who have control over certain manifestations of nature or certain powers; and this may be called the second stage of spiritual childhood. Gradually this leads to another step, which is a little higher; that is, that there is one governor over all these tribal gods or chiefs, and this conception is the monotheistic conception of a personal God; that He is the ruler of all, of the sun-god, of the moon-god, of departed spirits, of ancestors and bright spirits,—that is, the ruler of all. This is the beginning of the dualistic conception and here is the end of spiritual childhood. All those dualistic religions which we call monotheistic religions do not go beyond this. They lead our minds and souls to the worship of one personal God who dwells outside of nature and they make us believe that this is the highest, that there can be nothing higher.

These dualistic religions, therefore, like Zoroastrianism, and Mahomedanism, lead to the highest stage of spiritual childhood in the spiritual life. But the spiritual youth begins when we begin to realize that God is not outside of nature but He is in nature; He is not outside of us, He is in us; that He is not extra-cosmic but intra-cosmic; He is immanent and resident in nature; He is the soul of the universe; just as the soul of our body is the internal ruler of our body, so the soul of the universe is the internal ruler of the universe. He governs, not from outside, but from inside. He is the Creator, not in the sense that He sits somewhere and commands and creates the world out of the material which dwells outside of His own being, but He creates by pouring His spiritual influx in nature and starting the evolution of that cosmic energy which is called *Prakriti*, or nature. In fact, the cosmic energy forms the body of the Spiritual Being. God then appears to be both of the efficient and material cause of the universe, and therefore He is not only the Father but the Mother of the universe, Father and Mother, both in one. The individual souls come out of His own being like sparks coming out of a huge bonfire. The huge bonfire is Divinity and our souls are like sparks which have sprung out of that bonfire of Divinity. We are immortal by our birthright, because we are parts of that one stupendous whole.

This state gradually leads to spiritual maturity, where we do not think of the world, we do not think of creation; but, rising above all phenomena, we realize the indivisible oneness,—that we are not merely sparks, but we are something closer to divinity—we are one with God. Then we say, "I and my Father are one." Not one in the sense that an earthly child is one with its father, but it is unity,

because God is all in all, and all is God. There is nothing outside of God, everything has vanished, all phenomena have disappeared, all relative existences have disappeared and the whole universe appears to be like a solid mass of infinite and indivisible reality. All phenomenal existences seem to be like dreams. I am talking, you are listening,—this is like a dream ; you cannot realize it unless you rise on a higher plane. We are all playing parts on the stage of the world. I have taken some part and you have taken some other part. There is no difference. You are playing the part of a listener ; I am playing the part of a speaker, but we are all on the same stage. You may help me and I may help you. Your desires you are trying to fulfil by your thoughts and deeds, so everybody else is doing the same. You may have certain dreams in your life ; you may think that if you can accomplish these, you have fulfilled your purpose in life. Then, after fulfilling that, you think that there is another purpose. You must push on and reach that, and so on and on we go until all purposes are fulfilled, all desires are satisfied and all aims are gratified. So in reaching the maturity in spiritual life, we reach the absolutely monistic perception of spiritual oneness. It is not Pantheism. Do not for a moment dream that it is Pantheism. No, it is absolute monism ; there is no other word for it. Pantheism does not express it. Pantheism means, this is God ; mother is God, the chair is God. No, in absolute monism the chair does not exist ; the particular phenomenon does not exist, but we reach the back ground. God is like the eternal canvas upon which the beautiful picture of this phenomenal world is painted by the Divine Hand. Then we realise the canvas. At present we are fascinated and charmed by the colorings of the external ; we have forgotten the canvas, the back-

ground of the universe. Then we realize the background and we reach the highest.

The religion of the Vedanta teaches that there is one God, but with many aspects. From spiritual childhood we must rise to spiritual youth, and from spiritual youth to maturity; then we shall be one with the Infinite. The same God is worshipped under different names. The religion of the Vedanta is truly catholic and tolerant; it does not dispute, it has no particular form of worship, nor does it ask that you do this or that; but its main theme is that any form of worship which appeals to the sincerity and earnestness of the soul of the devotee is right. If you think that by worshipping any particular ideal, in a particular way, it will help you,—go and do it. Do not hesitate. If you think that it would not help you, do not do it. The worship of God depends upon the attitude of the worshipper, the attitude of the mind, the heart of the worshipper. If you wish to go and pray, go and pray; if you do not believe in prayer, do not pray. What you wish, go and do, but be directed by your highest impulse, by your highest desire.

Try to understand the highest purpose of life and then worship the ideal under any form or any name which appeals to you; do not hesitate for a moment. All rituals, all ceremonials, all forms of worship, are only the means to the highest end, to the realization of the divinity, and therefore the religion of the Vedanta embraces all other special sectarian religions, all forms of worship, under the different names that I have given you. Some do not care to worship a personal God, but think of His impersonal nature; they are just as good. They are not going astray. So long as there is sincerity and earnestness and devotion and love for the spiritual ideal, there is no going astray. We make our

heaven and hell on this earth by our thoughts and deeds. There is no other external hell or eternal place of punishment. Our own minds dwell in hell when we have performed some wicked deeds, some wrong. Our souls rebel then. But when we are in the path of righteousness, our souls are happy, there is peace, there is the manifestation of divinity; because God manifests when our minds are silent, and that silence comes through peace, and when there is peace, there is happiness and bliss.

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THE VEDANTA IN OUTLINE.*

BY PANDIT SITANATH TATTVABHUSHAN.

TWO MEANINGS OF 'VEDANTA.'

THE term 'Vedanta' is a compound of 'Veda' and 'anta' (end), and means, in its primary signification, the latter part of the Veda or Vedas. The Vedic literature is divided by the expounders of the Vedas into two main *kandas* or sections, the first or *purva* portion being called the *karma-kanda*, that is, the section treating of *karma*, actions or duties; and the second, *anta*, or *uttara* portion the *jnana-kanda*, the section on knowledge. The division is not clearly represented by distinct books or even chapters of the Vedas; but roughly speaking, the *Mantras* and the sacrificial portions of the *Brahmanas* represent the *karma-kanda*, and the treatises called *Upanishads*, attached mainly to the *Brahmanas*, represent the *jnana-kanda*. This *jnana-kanada*, of the Vedas is the Vedanta in the original sense of the word. As a part of the Veda, the Vedanta is *sruti* or scripture. As *sruti* or scripture, therefore, the Vedanta is identical with the Upanishads. The use of the term 'Vedanta' in this sense will be found in the Upanishads themselves, for instance, in the *Mundakopanishad III. 2.6.* and the *Svetasvataropanishad, VI. 22.* Sankaracharya, the greatest authority on the Vedanta, uses the word in this sense everywhere in his writings. However, the word 'anta' in 'Vedanta,' from meaning 'end' or 'latter part,' came gradually to mean 'conclusion,' 'gist' or 'purport.' The composers of the Upanishads claimed

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* Reprint from the Indian Review.

that they had discovered the gist or purport of all Vedic teaching in the knowledge of the Absolute, of whom the gods worshipped by the authors of the *Mantras*, as well as all objects in creation were, they taught, names forms or relative manifestations. The final end of all Vedic disciplines were, they thought, union with Brahman, the Absolute Being. In this latter sense, therefore, in the sense of the gist or purport of the Vedas, it was the Upanishads, again, which were called the 'Vedanta' or 'Vedantas.' But the term came gradually to mean something quite different from, though closely related to, the Upanishads. As the Upanishads treated of a large variety of subjects, both essential and non-essential to the spiritual life, and as the teachings of the different treatises were apparently, if not really, conflicting, it became necessary to have systematic statements of the main doctrines taught in them,—statements backed by reasonings where necessary, and reconciling apparent discrepancies in the original teaching. Thus arose what is called the Vedanta Philosophy, that is the Philosophy of, or based on, the Vedanta or Upanishad. This philosophy, the body of aphorisms which is its chief exponent, oftener goes by the name of 'Vedanta' than the Upanishads, the original Vedantas and the basis of all later Vedantic teaching. The distinction, however, between the Vedanta as *sruti* or scripture, and the Vedanta as *Darshana* or Philosophy, must never be lost sight of.

The Vedanta-Sruti.

The Vedanta as scripture consists, as I have said, of the Upanishads. Their traditional number is one hundred and eight; but modern scholars have found out that there are no fewer than one hundred and fifty bearing the name. All of them, however, are not genuine parts of the Vedas

nor do all truly represent the spirit of the original Vedantic teaching. Practically twelve are recognised as forming the Vedantic canon and the basis of the Vedantic Philosophy. They are the *Isa*, *Kena*, *Katha*, *Prasna*, *Mundaka*, *Mandukya*, *Taittiriya*, *Aitareya*, *Chhandogya*, *Brihadaranyaka*, *Kaushitaki* and *Svetasvatara* Upanishads. Of these the *Aitareya* and the *Kaushitaki* belong to the *Rigveda*; the *Kena* and the *Chhandogya* to the *Samaveda*; the *Isa* and the *Brihadaranyaka* to the *Sukla* or White *Yajurveda*; the *Katha*, the *Taittiriya* and the *Svetasvatara* to the *Krishna* or Black *Yajurveda*; and the *Prasna*, the *Mundaka* and the *Mandukya* to the *Atharvaveda*. The other Upanishads, such as the *Ramatapaniya*, *the Gopalatapania* and *Nrisinhatapaniya*, are mostly '*Sampradayika*,' *i.e.*, sectarian, and not content, like the twelve named above, with teaching of the Infinite and Absolute Being, extol historical or mythical heroes as incarnations of the Deity.

THE VEDANTA-DARSANA.

The most honoured exposition of the philosophy of the Vedanta is the body of aphorisms ascribed to Vyasa or Badarayana. Badarayana himself is named in these aphorisms as one of several teachers of the Vedantic Philosophy; so that Vedantism as a philosophical system must have existed and been widely taught long before the composition of these aphorisms, however ancient they may be, and possibly there may have been previous compendiums of the philosophy on which they were based. But as a fact we possess none more ancient than they. Some of the names by which these aphorisms are called deserve to be mentioned and remembered by the student of the Vedanta Philosophy. They often go by the name of the *Vedanta Darsana*, though all expositions of the Philosophy of the

Upanishads may claim the name. They are called the *Uttara Mimamsa*, because they are a *Mimamsa* or reasoned exposition of the *Uttara* or latter part of the Vedas, *i.e.*, of the Upanishads. They are so called in distinction from the *Purva Mimamsa* ascribed to Jaimini, which expounds the *Purva*, or earlier parts of the Vedas, *i.e.*, the *Mantras* and the sacrificial portions of the *Brahmanas*. They are called the *Brahma Sutras*, aphorisms expounding the nature of Brahman, in distinction from the *Dharma Sutras* or aphorisms expounding the nature of *Dharma* or duty, the subject matter of Jaimini's work. They are named the *Sariraka Sutras* or *Sariraka Mimamsa*, because they treat of the true nature of the *Sariraka*, the embodied soul. Other names are the *Vyasa Sutras*, the *Badarayana Sutras*, the *Vedanta Mimamsa* and the *Aupanishadi Mimamsa*. This great work, divided into four chapters and sixteen sections, consists of five hundred and fifty-eight pithy utterances many of which contain the concentrated gist of a great deal of meditation and reasoning. This fact makes the book almost unintelligible without a commentary. Various commentaries on it, however, are extant, commentaries which represent the various schools of the Vedanta Philosophy. Of these I shall speak later on. Besides the *Vedanta Sutras*, there are various works expounding the Philosophy of the Upanishads. But they all belong to some particular school or other, and shall be noticed when I come to speak of these schools.

The Three Vedantic Institutes.

Besides the twelve *Upanishads*, and the *Vedanta Sutras*, another work, the *Bhagavadgita*, is held by all Vedantic schools as embodying Vedantic teaching of an uncertain nature, and this in spite of the apparently sectarian character of the book—in spite of the fact, that

Krishna, the incarnation of Vishnu, is therein represented as the Supreme Being. So it has happened that ever since the time of Sankaracharya, and perhaps since a time anterior to him, the *Upanishads*, the *Vedanta Sutras* and the *Bhagavadgita* have been held to compose the complete Vedantic canon. They are called the three *prasthanas* or institutes of Vedantic teaching, the Upanishads being called the *Sruti Prasthana* or scriptural institute; the *Vedanta Sutras* the *Nyaya Prasthana* or logical institute; and the *Bhagavadgita* the *Smriti Prasthana* or institute of duty. All the great founders of the various Vedantic schools have commentaries on these three institutes, and their mutual differences consist in the different ways in which they interpret the fundamental teaching contained in the *Prasthanatrayam*.

UNSECTARIAN VEDANTISM.

This fundamental teaching, if it could be gathered from the canonical books without the aid of the founders of the Vedantic schools, or without being biassed by their peculiar views, would be true, uncertain Vedantism, not identified with the views of any particular Vedantic teacher of later times. But, as a fact, Vedantism, as a system, does not exist in such a pure and unsectarian form in any of its various representations. As I have already said, all the various works in which the philosophy is expounded, belong to some particular school or other. If an independent exposition were now attempted, it would, no doubt, bear the stamp of the expounder's habitual trend of thought and feeling, and would be set down as sectarian. It would perhaps even be identified with the one or the other of the existing schools. Perhaps this is inevitable from the very nature of things. Realism, Idealism, Monism, Dualism, Hedonism, Legalism, Rationalism, &c., are not so much

opinions identified with particular philosophers as they are phases or stages of thought which commend themselves to the mind of man according to the peculiarities of his nature and education. The teachings of the Upanishads and the two other Vedantic institutes are so various, representing so many phases and strata of thought, that it is possible to find authority in them for all the forms of speculation named above. I am indeed far from thinking that the principal teachers of Vedantic doctrine were not agreed as to a number of fundamental principles or that the highest teaching contained in the three institutes is not uniform. But I must confess that this highest and uniform Vedantism exists, even in the institutes, not to speak of later works, side by side with a good deal of lower or tentative teaching representing various stages of culture in the teachers. If, however, the latter class of teaching is held by some Vedantic teacher as essential, and embodied in his system as such, his method may be blamed as defective, but the claim of his system to be called Vedantism cannot justly be denied. The difficulty of deducing from the canonical books a system that would be recognised as Vedantism pure and simple, is, therefore, patent. But I shall nevertheless try to enumerate a few principles of a most general nature which are to be found in all Vedantic systems. It is the less difficult to find out some such principles from the fact that though differing from one another in the interpretation they respectively give of particular Vedantic doctrines, all Vedantic schools are opposed as one uniform system to the other schools of the national philosophy, for instance the Charvaka, the Buddhist, the Purva Mimamsa, the Sankhya, the Yoga, the Nyaya and the Vaiseshika school. Their points of differ-

ence from these schools are points of agreement among themselves. Thus, then, to begin with, the Charvaka doctrine of the material and destructible character of the soul is rejected by all Vedantic schools. The Vedantic doctrine of the soul is that it is immaterial and indestructible in nature. Then, the idealistic or rather individualistic doctrine of certain Buddhist philosophers, the doctrine that there is no world independent of the ideas of individual minds, is opposed by the Vedanta. It gives to Nature an existence independent of the individual soul, however dependent that existence may be on the Universal Soul. The same opposition is offered to Buddhist Sensationalism, the doctrine that there is nothing more real and permanent than perishing sensations, the Vedantic doctrine being that the Self, with its permanent ideas, is an unchangeable witness of the past and the present. So, in opposition to the Sankhya Dualism, the doctrine of Purusha and Prakriti as the dual cause of the world, the Vedantic teaching is that the cause of the world is one, namely Brahman, the Supreme Intelligence, who is both the regulating or occasional (nimitta) cause and the material (upadana) cause of the universe, having made the world out of his own will or nature without the help of any extraneous substance. In this respect the Vedanta is opposed to the Vaiseshika conception of eternal, uncreated atoms as the material cause of the Universe. Then again, the Yoga doctrine of a God existing apart from the individual soul is rejected by the Vedanta, the Vedantic doctrine of the relation of the individual and the universal Self being that the Universal exists continually in the individual, sustaining and regulating it. In the same manner the Nyaya doctrine of Nature, God and the individual soul as independent realities,

is refuted by the Vedanta as inconsistent with the infinitude of God, the Vedantic teaching being that everything is comprehended in the Divine existence. In practical matters, the Vedanta holds, in opposition to the *Purva Mimamsa*, that ceremonial observances have no absolute value, their importance consisting only in their being disciplines teaching the mind to look beyond the immediate objects of sense and purging it of the grosser desires. The Vedanta attaches great importance to devout meditations on Brahman, of which the *Upanishads* contain numerous samples, and the *Bhagavadgita* lays special stress on the culture of *bhakti*, the reverential love of God. In brief, *karma* or duty devoutly and disinterestedly performed, and *upasana* or devout meditation carried on with *bhakti*, leading to *jnana*, the knowledge and constant consciousness of the Supreme Being, constitute the ethical scheme of the Vedanta in its essence. The supreme end of existence is indissoluble union with Brahman, which may be realised in this life or another according to the quality of one's spiritual efforts. As to the future life, the Vedanta teaches that the individual soul, which is an eternal, uncreated part or manifestation of the Supreme Soul, goes through a countless series of incarnations till it is freed from the fetters of physical embodiment and blessed with conscious union with God. These fetters are, the Vedanta teaches, five in number, and are called *koshas* or sheaths, since they hide from the soul, in its ignorant state, its true spiritual essence. In the various stages of culture previous to the highest enlightenment, the soul ignorantly identifies itself with one or another of the following: the first or the most gross, the *annamaya kosha* or the gross material body; the second in order of

grossness, the *pranamaya kosha* or the vital powers; the third, the *manomaya kosha* or the sensorium; the fourth, the *vijnanamaya kosha* or the understanding; and the fifth, the *anandamaya kosha* or the pleasurable emotions. Beyond these, but illumining all with the light of its consciousness, is the pure self, whose true nature and relation to God must be realised before *moksha* or liberation can be attained. However, having a subtler body than the visible, namely, that consisting of the subtler sheaths, it is easy to see how the soul passes at death from one body to another or from one region of the universe to a higher or lower one. As to the details of the future life, the Vedanta conceives three very different states for the three classes into which it divides all moral beings. For those who have led vicious or merely natural lives, without subjecting themselves to any disciplines, it anticipates no less horrible a destiny than transmigration into inferior organisms, at best to the bodies of the lowest class of human beings. It seems to consider the lower animals also as moral beings and admits the possibility of their gradual elevation to humanity. The scientific doctrine of the evolution of the higher animals from the lower, seems to favour this view, though no scientific evidence in the true sense is possible in the matter. As for the pious, the Vedanta awards two different destinations to them according to the nature of the disciplines they have passed through. The followers of the *karmakhanda*, those whose worship consist in offering sacrifices to the Gods, are destined for the Pitriloka, the habitation of the manes, where they pass through a way called the *Pitriyana* and figuratively described as consisting of a number of phenomenal objects such as mist, dark nights, clouds &c. Through this way they pass to the moon, which

either contains the Pitriloka or is associated with it. There they dwell in enjoyment of the fruits of their good works until they, the fruits, are spent out, when they have to retrace their steps to the earth and be re-born according to their merits. On the other hand, the followers of the *jnana kanda*, the spiritual worshippers of the Infinite, are destined for the Brahmaloka, the world of Brahman. They also have to follow a particular path called the *Devayana*, the way of the Gods. This also consists of a number of elements which are altogether more auspicious than those composing the *Pitriyana*. The most prominent are the rays of the sun, which perhaps represent spiritual enlightenment. Led through this path to the divine regions, painted in gorgeous colours, but in language which is evidently figurative, the spirits of the pious are said to live in perfect beatitude, in constant communion with God and in the company of the *devas*, and never return to any mundane state of existence unless at their own will. Whether this Brahmaloka is the final goal of all rational beings, or there is a higher state of existence, is a matter of controversy among the various schools of the Vedanta Philosophy, of which I now proceed to a short account.

The Vedantism of the Schools.

It is in the detailed interpretation of the fundamental principles enumerated above that the Vedanta Philosophy branches out into schools. Of these, three have the largest following, those of Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhva, the followers of the first, again, outnumbering by far those of the other two. These three perhaps are the only schools that may be called living, and are also important as representing three poles of thought to one or another of which

the mind of man naturally turns. To these, I, as a native of Bengal and knowing more of this province than others, shall add the school of Baladeva Vidyabhushana, to which the followers of Chaitanya belong, and that of Raja Rammohan Roy, the founder of the Brahmo Samaj, who faithful to the instincts of a true Indian reformer, wrote commentaries on the *Prasthanatrayam*, and whose school, though not sticking to traditional methods in all matters, is yet important as representing a fusion of ancient Indian thought with the thought of the West. That there were more or less opposed schools of Vedantic thought even before the foundation of the earliest of the existing schools, namely that of Sankara, appears evident from the mention of Vedantic teachers in the *Sutras* with the points in which they differed in their interpretation of the scriptures. That there were at least two main currents of Vedantic thought before Sankara and Ramanuja, is also evident from these two teachers professing to follow two ancient traditions—traditional methods I mean—in their respective commentaries, and from the former's anticipating, in substance, the views of the latter several centuries before his actual advent, and refuting them in his commentaries. To indicate, however, a few lines of difference followed by the different schools. Though agreeing in the opinion that Brahman is the sole cause of the universe, the schools differ a good deal as to the method of creation and the nature of the power with which God creates. Sankara holds that creation is not real in the same sense and in the same degree as the creator. The creation of a real world, of a world really different from the creator, would affect his infinitude by placing a reality outside the limits of his existence. Nor could creation be the creator's assuming a

particular form, for that would militate against his perfect and unchangeable nature. Nature and the finite soul, therefore, Sankara concludes, are not real as such, but only passing appearances of the one only Reality, Brahman, and the power of creation, though eternally existing in him and containing in it the germ of all created things, is in fact a mysterious and inscrutable power, called Maya or Avidya, producing the passing illusions of finite intelligences and material worlds without at the same time subjecting the Supreme Being to these illusions. Thus Sankara is a Mayavadi as to the method of creation and an Advaitavadi or Monist as to the relation of creation to the creator. As the power of creation is a power of producing illusions and not realities, and as the finite does not really exist, but only seems to do so, Sankara conceives that the Divine nature has no necessary relation to the finite and is therefore an absolute or unqualified unity. His Advaitavada is therefore called *visuddha* *i.e.*, pure, absolute or unqualified. Very different is Ramanuja's idea of creation and its relation to the creator. If created objects, he says, were independent of the creator, their real existence would indeed be inconsistent with his infinitude; but though distinct from him, they are dependent on him and are, in that sense, his *Prakara* or modes, and as such real and not illusory existences. They are necessarily related to him and exist in him eternally in a subtle form before creation and in a developed form in the state of creation. The method of creation, according to Ramanuja, is therefore a *parinama*, change or evolution of the cosmic form of God from a subtle to a developed state, leaving the extra-cosmic or divine aspect of his nature untouched and unchanged. The necessary relation of the world to

God introduces, in Ramanuja's opinion, an element of difference in the divine nature, which is conceived by Ramanuja as a qualified unity—a unity not related to anything outside of it but diversified by relation within itself. Hence Ramanuja's Monism or Advaitavada is called *Visishta* or qualified. Madhva, otherwise called Anandatirtha or Purnaprajna, was a defender of common sense and condemned Monism in both the unqualified and the qualified shape. Though holding matter and the individual soul to be dependent on God, he conceived the Infinite in such an abstract manner, that he could see no unity between it and the finite. He put particular emphasis on the expressions of duality and difference in the *Upanishads* and the *Vedanta Sutras*, and explained all utterances of an opposite drift in the light of the former. His system, therefore, is called Dvaitavada or Dualism, and is really the return of Philosophy from the heights of speculation to the uncritical conceptions of common sense hallowed with a glow of reverential faith. The same remark applies to the system of Baladeva Vidyabhushana. Raja Rammohan Roy follows Sankara in the main, but interprets him in a way that modifies to a certain extent some of the features of his system that are repulsive to common sense. Of the systems of Baladeva and the Raja, I shall, however, for obvious reasons, confine myself to this brief mention. Returning to Sankara and Ramanuja, we find the ethical and spiritual philosophies of these thinkers deeply affected by their differing conceptions of the world and the Divine nature. Sankara, looking upon all differences as ultimately illusory, regards all actions, even the highest, as consistent only with a passing state of ignorance, since they all proceed upon a distinction of

agents, things acted upon and the fruits of action. On the other hand, Ramanuja, to whom distinctions, when rightly seen by the light of Reason, are real, regards the higher duties of life as of permanent value. For the same reason, while the latter sees no incompatibility between the highest enlightenment and the householder's life, the former extols detachment and regards the anchorite's life as an essential condition of liberation. Again contemplating Brahman as impersonal Intelligence, Sankara conceives even the highest reverential worship as a transitional stage of culture, and regards a consciousness of absolute unity with the supreme as the goal of all spiritual discipline. To Ramanuja, on the other hand, Brahman is a Personal Being, and even in the highest stages of communion, the worshipper feels that he is distinct from his object of worship. As regards liberation, likewise, the two schools differ a great deal. The finite soul's ascension to Brahmaloka, as described in the *Srutis* and the *Sutras*, is accepted by Ramanuja as its final liberation, while Sankara, finding that the description of that state of liberation leaves several points of difference between the individual and the Universal Self, teaches that it is only partial or relative liberation that is thus described, and that there is a higher state of absolute liberation indicated in certain passages of the canon,—a state involving a complete merging of the individual self in the Absolute. Madhva, the Dualist, agrees with Ramanuja in the main as regards ethical and spiritual matters.

LATER VEDANTIC LITERATURE.

Besides the commentaries on the three institutes written by the great founders of the schools, a good number of hand-books expounding the philosophy have been written

by the founders themselves and their followers. Unfortunately it is only works belonging to the schools of Sankara that are well-known throughout the country. Madhva's *Tattvamuktavali* is read in Bengal, but Ramanuja's *Vedantasangraha* and other minor works, and even his commentary on the Upanishads are only heard of. Of works of Sankara's school, the *Upadesa Sahasri* and the *Vivekachudamani* ascribed to him are well-known and so are several smaller tracts said to be written by him, but probably composed by later writers belonging to his school. The *Panchadasi* by Madhavacharya and the *Vedantasara* by Yogindra-Sadananda are among the best known of minor works on the Vedanta, and have been translated into English. Somewhat less known but still important is the *Vedanta Paribhasha* by Dharmaraja Advaeindra. One of the most ancient books of this class, but not strictly philosophical in method, is the celebrated *Yogavasishtha Ramayana.* For English readers I may mention the translations of the Upanishads by Professor Max Muller, by Mr. Roer and others in the Asiatic Society's Edition, by Messrs. Chatterji and Mead of the Theosophical Society, by Pandit Sitarama Sastri and Ganganath Jah and by the present writer. The edition done by the two Pandits last mentioned has the singular recommendation of containing translations of Sankara's commentary. The *Vedanta Sutras* with the commentary of Sankara have been translated by Professor Thibaut and the *Bhagavadgita* by Professor Telang and many others.

THE VEDANTA AS A BASIS OF POPULAR RELIGION.

In this article I have had no opportunity to say what I think, as to the philosophicol basis and the logical strength of Vedantism. My aim has been to give a most general

and unbiassed statement, untinged by sectarian predilections, of the fundamental principles of the Vedanta. But as a Vedantist I may perhaps be allowed to say at the conclusion of the article that I belive Vedantism, in its essence, to have a very long life before it, as it has had a long life behind it in the past, as a system of Philosophy and as a basis of popular religions. Every system of Hinduism worth mentioning has built upon it, for it is opposed to none, and it has been alike the ideal aspired after by the novice and the backward in religious culture, and the solace and delight of the advanced devotee. As I understand the Vedanta, I find no authority in it for image worship as it prevails in the country at the present time. But the early Vedantists believed in orders of beings higher than man and some of them were in favour of honouring them according to the methods laid down in the ancient rituals, though others regarded such worship to be consistent only with ignorance and unworthy of the wise. However, the Vedantic discipline of concentrating the attention in particular objects of Nature and contemplating them as Brahman, since they are his relative manifestation, seems to have given a sort of countenance to Idolatry and so we find Idolatry and Vedantism closely leagued together in various sects both in ancient and modern times. But we also find schools, like the followers of Nanak, who shook off Idolatry but adhered to the Vedanta. The Brahmo Samaj movement of the present day was inaugurated as a purely Vedantic movement, and if some of its later leaders loosened the Vedanta connection on account of their defective scholarship and denational education, the Samaj seems to be now, in its latest developments, tracing back its way to the old affinity and feeling after the old foundations

beneath its feet. The Theosophical movement is largely Vedantic and the Ramkrishna or Vivekananda movement professedly so. Muhammadanism and Vedantism meet in Sufism and other esoteric systems of Islam, and there is no reason why the enlightened Mussalman of the present day should be blind to the claims of his Hindu brother's revived Vedantism. As to Christianity, appearances point to a not very distant fusion of the most liberal forms of this faith with the most advanced and reformed forms of Vedantism—a fusion far more glorious and fruitful than that of Neoplatonism and Christianity in the early centuries of the Christian era. These appearances are not confined to Europe and America, but are to be seen in this country also in the growing interest of certain Christian converts in the study of the Vedanta and in the attempt made in certain quaters to establish a newly conceived Christian Theology on the basis of the Vedanta Philosophy. There is nothing to prevent the success of such an attempt. The Vedantic doctrine of incarnation, rightly cenceived, is so rational and liberal, that if the holy Jesus can be historically proved to have said and felt, as well lived in the consciousness of the truth—'I and my father are one,' no true Vedantist can refuse to accept him as an incarnation of the Deity, as much as Vamadeva of the Vedic days and Sri Krishna of the Bhagavadgita.

THE VEDANTA RELIGION.*

By Professor M. RANGACHARIAR, M. A.

Vedanta is a name which is generally given to the *Upanishads.* In this connection it is interpreted to mean the *end of the Vedas*, that is, the last portion of the revealed scriptural literature of the Hindus. It is also used as the name of a well-known system of Indian philosophy which is mainly based on the teachings of the *Upanishads.* The word may, however, be more appropriately understood as *the end of all knowledge.* What, then, is really the end of all knowledge? Even the physical sciences have been said to be like the kind mother who, when asked merely to give bread, gives also the invigorating milk of ideas. So, the immediate practical utility of knowledge is certainly not the best part of it. In that transfiguration of man's mind, which is brought about by means of grand, noble and all-comprehending ideas, consists largely the value of knowledge as an aid to human progress. "The ultimate problem of all thought is," it has been well remarked by a writer in the latest number of *Mind*, "the relation of the Finite to the Infinite, of the Universe to the Primal Source of Being from Whom all existence proceeds." There is certainly nothing higher for the human understanding to try to know than the nature of this relation. It is an "open secret" which very few persons are able to read intelligently at all; and even among the gifted few, who read it in one way or another, there is much room for wide differences of opinion. This relation between the

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Universe and its Primal Source has not been, at all times, understood anywhere in the same way; nor have the different peoples of the earth looked at it from time to time in the same light. Nevertheless man has had, all along in the course of his history, to live out his life from day to day relying upon some sort of belief in regard to this all-important relation between the Finite and the Infinite. Indeed the history of man's apprehension of this relation everywhere determines the history of his religion; for, religion is nothing other than the knowledge of this relation and the consequent adjustment of human thoughts, feelings, and activities in accordance with that knowledge.

While the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad Gita* form the spiritual foundations of Vedantic thought in India, the formulation of the Vedanta-philosophy is to be found in the Aphorisms (*Sutras*) of Badarayana; and therein it is declared that the object of the Vedanta is to know the *Brahman*, which is the cause of the birth, existence, and dissolution of the Universe. It is clear from this that the Vedanta does not at all question the existence of the Infinite, aud also that it derives the Finite itself from the Infinite. Materialism is beginning to be already so completely discredited even in the West as almost not to deserve the name of philosophy; and in the history of Indian thought it never had any really serious and important place assigned to it. The Indian mind has been too logical and too contemplative to assert that the Finite is all in it. It cannot be denied that a few Indian men of learning have occasionally *played* with materialism; but India as a whole has never been able to shake off the awe-inspiring and ever-present steadying weight of the Infinite.

Therefore the Vedanta, while taking into consideration the relation between the Finite and the Infinite, has had only the choice between three alternative views to adopt, which views may be characterised as (1) mechanical, (2) organic, and (3) monistic. The first view holds both the Finite and the Infinite to be real, and conceives the relation between them to be more or less akin to that between an engine and its maker who is also its driver. This may be said to be the view of the *Dwaita Vedanta.* The second view also holds both the Finite and the Infinite to be real, but fuses them together into a single organic whole by conceiving the relation between them to be like that between an organism and its life or 'vital force.' This is the *Visisht-adwaita-Vedanta.* The third view holds the Infinite to be the only reality, and conceives the Finite to be merely an illusory reflection or representation thereof. And this is the *Adwaita Vedanta.* In none of these schools are we led to apprehend the Infinite merely as a distant God; in all of them we may easily notice the belief in what has been aptly called the inter-penetration of the spiritual and the material worlds, for the God of the *Upanishads* is all-pervading and is both far and near at the same time. Further, the Vedanta, however understood, knows only one God, only one Infinite; and man is called upon to see that the purpose of life is to help to fulfil the purpose of universal creation by himself realising, and enabling others to realise, the divineness of human nature and its goal in the God-head. There is, however, no agreement between the various schools of the Vedanta as to the details of the exact nature of the ultimate condition of the liberated human soul. There is no exclusiveness about the religion of the Vedanta; the gates of its temple are open for all to

enter. The enlightened Vedantin is expected to make no distinction between a Brahmin, and a Chandala, a cow and a dog, between friends and foes, as well as between the virtuous and the sinful. One of the excellent features of the Vedanta is its open recognition of the ethical and spiritual one-ness of man's nature.

To the Monistic Vedantin the way of knowledge is the way to *Moksha*—to liberation from the trammels of ever-recurring births and deaths. According to him God is altogether inaccessible to human thoughts and words, and all forms of worship and prayer only go to make the unconditioned appear as conditioned. Nevertheless, *Upasana* or worship is recognised as a necessity even to him, as he holds it to be of great value in preparing the human soul to receive with calm illumination the great truth of its one-ness with the Divine. The followers of the other two schools of the Vedanta see in God the harmonious synthesis of the most perfect ideals of truth, goodness, and beauty. To them religious worship is an inviolable duty, and the way of worship is the way to *Moksha*. Then, what is the kind of worship that is enjoined on all those who follow in some way or other the teachings of the Vedanta? The old Vedic way of worship consisted in offering prayers and sacrifices to the deities. "It is no exaggeration to state that no nation appears at the dawn of history so full of prayer and praise as the Hindu Aryans," says a Christian Missionary in a recent work of his on Vedic religion. When, however, this profusion of prayer ceases to flow from the abundance of genuine feeling in the heart, and when sacrifices lose their original significance in the way of establishing the wished-for kind of communion between the worshipper and the deity, then

prayers get petrified into mere formulæ, and sacrifices become altogether meaningless rituals. Worship which is, on the practical side, the essence of religion becomes the shield of hypocrisy and deceit. This does not take place before the old ideal of religion and of man's duties is felt to be more or less inadequate in the new circumstances, and a new one is slowly beginning to get itself established. We find clear signs of such a change even in the *Satapatha-Brahmana* wherein it is said :—He who sacrifices to the *Atman*, or the Self, is superior. One should say, 'There is he who sacrifices to the gods and also there is he who sacrifices to the *Atman*.' He who understands that by such and such a means such and such a one of his members is rectified, and that by such and such another means such and such another of his members is restored,—he is the person who sacrifices to the *Atman*. He is freed from this mortal body and from sin in the same way in which the serpent is freed from its worn-out skin; and acquiring the nature of *Rik*, *Yajus* and *Saman*, and of the Sacrifice, he attains to heaven. On the other hand, he who understands that gods are to be worshipped with such and such an oblation, and offers it up to them, is like an inferior who pays tribute to a superior, or like a *Vaisya* who pays tribute to the king. This person does not conquer for himself so great a world as the other does." Do we not here see that the religion of self-discipline and self-culture is already trying to assert itself as against the old religion of sacrificial rituals? It is indeed far better for a man to fortify himself against tempations, and subdue the evil that is in him, than perform rites and offer numberless sacrifices of various kinds to various deities. The object of all true worship must be not so much to please God as to

make man worthy of His love. Even in the Code of Manu, which distinctly enforces caste, ceremonial laws and ritualistic religion, we find evidence enough to indicate the existence of a strong partiality in favour of the Vedanta. "The man," says Manu, "who, recognising himself in all beings and all beings in his own self, sacrifices to the *Atman*, enters into absolute freedom." In all probability the freedom that is referred to here is the freedom from the bondage of the Law, that is, from being subject to the operation of ceremonial and ritualistic regulations concerning society and religion. It may mean *Moksha* as well.

In the *Upanishads* there are many passages which clearly set forth this very change in the ideal of worship. The second *Khanda* of the *Mundakopanishad* emphatically declares that all those, who believe in the saving efficacy of sacrificial rituals and perform them, are foolish, ignorant, and self-sufficient men, going to ruin and destruction like the blind that are led by the blind. In the place of elaborate rituals it enjoins austerity, faith, peacefulness, retirement into the forest, and living by the begging of food. In the very last *Anuvaka* of the *Narayaniya* portion of the *Taittiriyopanishad*, we have a passage in which the various elements of the sacrificial ritual are replaced by the elements required for character-building, obviously with the object of pointing out that Vedantic Worship is far different from Vedic Worship. The same *Narayaniya* portion of the *Taittiriyopanishad* speaks of truth, austerity, temperance, peacefulness, liberality, duty, upbringing of children, worship in the way of kindling the sacred fire, &c, mental contemplation, and resignation, as things of the highest importance without which no man would be able to

realise for himself the glory of God. The Vedantic religion is distinctly not a religion of mere rituals but one of righteousness; and in another *Upanishad* self-restraint, charity, and mercy are naturally regarded as being very much better materials of worship than forms of rituals. In this age of individualistic self-assertion the Vedantic discipline of self-denial may appear too rigorous, cold, and uninviting; but the seeds of salvation for individuals, as well as for communities of individuals, are always to be found only in the faithful practice of difficult self-denial. Self-assertion strengthens the bond of *Karma*, while self-denial leads to the freedom of the soul—that blissful freedom from the bondage of matter which comes to man only when he deserves it. Every soul that is bound to matter has to work out its own liberation, and nothing can show better than the Vedantin's theory of *Karma*, how what a man does here makes or mars his hereafter. The unborn and immortal part of man, namely, his soul, is alone responsible for the acquisition of *Moksha* either through the knowledge of truth or by deserving the grace of God. The soul alone is the friend of the soul, the soul alone is the foe of the soul. Man's sense of moral responsibility can in no way be made stronger. It is but proper to point out that with the Vedanta self-denial does not necessarily mean either quietism or asceticism. According to the Gita it implies the willing performance of the duties incumbent upon us without attachment to the result flowing therefrom, whatever may be the rank in which we are placed to fight out the battles of life. All forms of worship are good, according to the author of the Gita, so far as they go to aid us in combining, in the conduct of our lives, honest and earnest work with sincere resignation and disinterested self-sacri-

fice; and indeed one of the best forms of worship is declared to be the worship of silent contemplation.

The Gita recognises that all are not capable of having the same knowledge of truth and of submitting to the same discipline of self-denial and adopting the same manner of worship, and thus takes it for granted that all cannot be of the same religion. "The religion of the many must necessarily be more incorrect than that of the refined and reflective few, not so much in its essence as in its forms, not so much in the spiritual idea which lies latent at the bottom of it, as in the symbols and dogmas in which that idea is embodied." This remark of a thoughtful English writer is so true that it needs no corroboration, and our own Vedantic Scriptures wisely refrain from all particularisation of forms, symbols, and dogmas. "In whatever way people come to me," says Sri Krishna, "in that same way do I accept them." Forms and symbols and dogmas are not at all essential to the true Vedantic Religion. But it does not despise them, seeing that many of us cannot do without them, even when they are not of the best kind. It is said again in this our Divine Lay—"Those who are devoted to other gods, and offer worship with faith, even they, Arjuna, worship me in reality in a way that is not law ordained. I am indeed the Lord and receiver of all worship: those who do not know me as I am, fall in consequense. The worshippers of the gods go to the gods, ancestor-worshippers go to the spirits, and those that worship me go to me. Whosoever with devotion offers to me a leaf, or a flower, or a fruit, or water, *that* I accept as an offering brought to me with devotion by one who has a well-disciplined soul. Whatever you do, whetever you eat, whatever you offer as sacrifice in the fire,

whatever you give, or whatever austereties you practice, O Arjuna, purpose it for me."

The Vedantic Religion, accordingly, believes in one and only one God, in His omnipenetrativeness, as it has been aptly termed, and in the spiritual oneness throughout of human nature and human destiny. It is not exclusive, and has no peculiar rites and symbols and dogmas. But it does not object to any form of worship, as long as such worship is in harmony with the aspiring heart of the worshipper. It enforces self-dicipline and self-culture, and teaches man to realise the life of righteousness as the best means of worshipping God and of obtaining deliverance and bliss. It is in this manner truly catholic and wisely tolerant.

THE ETHICS OF THE VEDANTA*

BY THE LATE MR. N. VYTHINATHA AIYAR, M. A.

THE doctrine of *karma* is, in all its essential features, the same for the three systems of the Vedanta philosophy. Whatever may be the conception formed of the ultimate nature and lot of the individual *Jiva*, whether they regard it as the supreme soul in temporary obscuration, or as a distinct entity now and for ever, and whatever view they may hold regarding its relation to the *Brahman*, Hindu philosophers are in entire accord on the question of the force that determines for the individual his career upon this earth. The life of each man is shaped for him in the main by *karma* or conduct. But what is this *karma*, which is so potent over our lives? A bare statement of the theory in its extremest outlines seems to bring it perilously near to fatalism. But the two are quite distinct and even diametrically opposed. The latter is destructive of all responsibility in man; it reduces him to a mere automaton moving along grooves cut out for him by an inexorable power. The Hindu conception of the human will and human responsibility is far different from this. The question of the Liberty of the Will, originating in most part in the unfortunate application to the Will of the term Liberty, a term that has no more connection with it than any other term like whiteness, sweetness, &c.,—this controversy seems to be unknown to Hindu Philosophy. But the doctrine of *karma*, leaves to the individual will the maximum amount of freedom that

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may be claimed for it; it makes the individual and the individual alone responsible for the whole of his career here. He is not under the control, in his voluntary actions, of any irresistible power external to him; he has not to suffer vicariously for the sins of others; and he cannot hope for redemption through the vicarious expiation of another. He knows that he has to bear the whole burden of his conduct himself.

> Yes, all the deeds that men have done,
> In light of day, before the sun,
> Or veiled beneath the gloom of night,
> The good, the bad, the wrong, the right,
> These, though forgotten, re-appear,
> And travel, silent, in their rear.

This escort of *karma*, which thus ushers the individual into this world is the aggregate of his deeds, good and bad in his past lives. This is his *Sanchita karma*, the aggregate of past deeds. Of this total aggregate, each particular deed works out its results on the individual in its due course. When a *Jiva* enters upon its career of life in a particular animal frame, it does so in expiation of some one of its deeds in the past. This, of which each one of us is now experiencing the result and which has given us this particular physical and mental configuration, is known as *prarabdha karma*—the commenced deed. The deeds which we may perform in the future form the *Agami karma*. The entire exhaustion of the aggregate *karma* of the individual would be tantamount to final liberation form the bonds of life and death, and hence would mean salvation. To this exhaustion the individual has to work his way; and destroy the accumulated *karma* of the past with the aid of his conduct in the present and in his future. But the course,

already entered upon by him under the influence of what is known as *Prarabdha karma,* must be gone through to the end. Our present life belongs to it ; and we cannot shake it off in the middle. But while undergoing the effects of this much of our deeds in the past, we may also be working our way to the final liberation from the sway of *karma,* and to salvation, by means of a virtuous life.

Here, at this stage of the argument, arises the question as to the nature of virtue. To a life of virtue the Vedantin ascribes the important result of relieving the human soul from its burden of *karma.* Virtue or good works lead to knowledge, and knowledge leads to salvation. A blind observance of the dicta of religion is useless ; and knowledge without works is still worse : " All (who worship what is not real knowledge, who are engaged in works, good though they be) enter into blind darkness ; those who delight in real knowledge (without the practice of virtue) enter into greater darkness."* It is only those who know " at the same time both knowledge and non-knowledge"† (virtuous works) that can overcome death and secure salvation. We should realise in the first place the fact that this body is perishable and that virtue alone can lead to ' true knowledge.' But we must also remember that attainment of true knowledge does not take away the need for a virtuous life. Sages like Janaka did not deem it proper to abandon their duties and responsibilities even though they had ascended up to the highest steps of wisdom. " My body ends in ashes. Om ! Mind, remember ; Remember thy deeds !"‡ Such is the solemn adjuration of the Vedantin to his mind. It is not to forget itself ; nor

*Isa. Up. 9. † *Ibid,* 11. ‡ *Ibid.* 17.

is it to forget its deeds ; and all the while, it should also remember that the " body ends in ashes."

What are the deeds which the mind is thus adjured to remember, and the man to perform ? The believers in a personal God have an easy answer to this question. The commandments of the Divine Ruler of man form the basis for the distinction of right and wrong. The followers of Sankara, on the other hand, to whom the *Brahman* is not a personal entity distinct from the individual soul, may be snpposed to be in a fix in answering this question. Where are they to seek for the foundation of ethical distinctions ? The world is an illusion ; the human soul is but a temporary sojourner in the physical surroundings of its own creation. But the bonds of *karma* must be severed ; and this can be done only with the help of knowledge, and knowledge can be attained only by good deeds. And it becomes incumbent on them to explain how this is to be accomplished.

We confine our remarks in this article to the teaching on this subject in the *Isavasya Upanishad*, which gives a brief statement of the Vedanta doctrine of ethics. It consists of but 18 slokhas ; but in this short compass it gives a clear account of the ethics, acceptable equally to all the three branches of the Vedantic school of thought. It is unnecessary, as we have said, to dwell upon the ultimate foundation of ethical distinctions in the case of the believers in a personal God. Let us see how the Adwaitin also can secure an efficient basis for the inculcation of virtuous conduct in life.

The *Isavasya Upanishad* teaches that man should live, work, know and attain salvation. Life is not to be thrown away by him. The human soul has a goal to win ; that

goal is, in the view of the Adwaitin, the recognition of its oneness with the *Brahman*. Though the *Jiva* is to all appearance only a deluded and shackled toy of the phenomenal world and of *karma*, it is yet the all-embracing and all-pervasive spirit of the Universe. Into the logical basis of this doctrine it is not our purpose to enter at present. Its ethical aspect alone concerns us here. There is an aspect of the *Adwaita* theory that places it in a position of advantage ethically. It is the eminence of towering grandeur to which it raises the human soul. It is not simply a spiritual entity exalted above the Universe to the region of eternal bliss. It stands alone and has no second; it is greater than the greatest, and smaller than the smallest. We shall quote here a few of the expressions in which the Hindu philosopher endeavours to express his conception of the self: "That one moves not; but is swifter than thought. The senses never reached it. It walked before them." Each man may say unto himself: "I am the generator and the destroyer of the entire Universe. Than me there is nothing higher. On me all this Universe is woven, as gems are strung on a string. I am the flavour in the water, the light in the sun and moon. By me the Universe is pervaded. I am the Supreme, the Highest, the Eternal, Unborn and All-pervading." Man is not the mere creature of a God: he is God Himself. He has not simply the image impressed upon him of his Creator; he is himself the Creator. He is the Lord of creation in a sense higher and nobler than that assigned to this expression by the religions of the West.

Will one imbued with such a lofty conception of his soul, condescend to contaminate it with evil in thought, word or action? Will he defile his *Atman* with base deeds?

Nobility of character cannot but come of necessity to a man with so noble an ideal of himself. But as man is constituted at present, before his eyes are opened by true knowledge, when he is not fully conscious of the true glory of his soul : and when " the door of the True is covered with a golden disc," how is he to get into the other side of the gates of Heaven ? How is he to see the nature of the True ? He believes in a good path which would lead him to the attainment of true knowledge ; and he believes that virtue and knowledge would lead him on ultimately to *Brahma-Sakshatkara*. But this life into which the *Jiva* is thrown by its *Karma* is not to be despised as it furnishes us with a sphere for the practice of good works, and hence for the destruction of the aggregate of past *karma*.

The injunction to the mortal is that " ever doing works here," he should " desire to live a hundred years."* But he performs the works not for his own benefit. " Works will not cling to a man" when he performs them in the right spirit. He secures enjoyment, not by seeking it by means of works, but only by a complete surrender of himself and of his works. " When thou hast surrendered all this, then thou mayest enjoy."†

The Vedantin " beholds all beings in the self, and the self in all beings ;"‡ and the human race, nay, all animate existence has its true being in *Brahman*. The self should, therefore, be merged in this conception of the oneness or solidarity of all beings. §" Verily, a husband is not dear, that you may love the husband ; but that you may love the self, therefore a husband is dear. Verily, a wife is not

* Isa. Up. 2. † *Ibid.* 1. ‡ *Ibid.* 6. § Brih. Up. 2, 4.

dear, that you may love the wife ; that you may love the self, therefore a wife is dear." Here is a basis for the practice of virtue in universal love, before which the injunction that we should love our neighbours as ourselves dwindles into insignificance.

But the main source of ethical light to the *Adwaitin* is his own inner self. In himself he has an infallible guide along the right path. "Whosoever knows that person, whose dwelling is love, whose sight is the heart, whose mind is light,—the principle of every Self, he indeed is a teacher."* The heart of every man is tuned to the promptings of righteousness ; he needs no light other than what fills his own mind, and so a teacher in virtue, other than his own self. Here is the ethical basis in the innermost conscience of the individual for the Vedantin. But human conscience full of self-enlightenment as it is, is yet capable of being thwarted by the bodily environment of the soul. The True abides in the heart. "With the heart we know what is true. . . . . The heart indeed is the Highest Brahman."† But knowledge is not virtue. The *Jiva*, self-enlightened as he is, is yet entangled in the trammels of *Avidya*. The *Jiva* consists of desires. And as his desire, so is the will ; and as is will, so his deed ; and whatever deeds he does, that he will reap."‡ Self-abnegation, the sacrifice of what binds or individualizes the *Jiva*, the undoing of desires which enter the heart, this is the road to immortality. "When all desires which once entered his heart are undergone, then does the mortal become immortal, then he obtains *Brahman*."§ The subjugation of the misleading impulses in us enables us to overcome evil.

* *ibid.* 3, 9 † *ibid.* 4, 3. ‡ Brh. Up. 4,4 § *Ibid.*

Without this self-discipline, knowledge and virtue cannot be possible for us, and evil is not destroyed. "He therefore that knows it, after having become quiet, subdued, satisfied, patient, collected, sees Self in self, sees all as Self."‖ The perception of the oneness of human nature, which is to the *Advaitin* the ultimate basis of universal love, and hence ef ethical conduct, is impossible to the man who is not subdued and collected. "Evil does not overcome him, he overcomes all evil. Evil does not burn him, he burns all evil. Free from evil, free from spots, free from doubt,"* he attains to the *Brahman*.

The innate guidance relied upon by the *Advaitin* should not be taken to mean a disregard of our sacred writings. Those are the outward embodiments of the breathings of the Soul; and as such serve to help the blinded *Jiva* to an easy realisation of its own self-contained light. The fire is there; but it is obscured by the covering of ignorance. And the contact with the light that burns eternally in the *Sastras* imparts an electric stimulus to the inner spirit of man, and rouses it up to the height of its intrinsic greatness. "As clouds of smoke proceed by themselves out of lighted fire, thus verily, O Maitreyi, has been breathed forth from this great Being what we have as the Vedas, &c."†

The life as a whole should be regarded as a "sacrifice." The conquest over temptations, which have root in our bodily cravings, is man's *Dicksha*,—his preparation to enter upon the life-sacrifice. Its fruits are penance, liberality, righteousness, kindness and truthfulness. And the *yagna* is completed with death, which is the *avabhritha*, the

‖ Brh. Up. 4, 4 * Ibid. † Brih. Up. 4, 4.

closing ceremonial of the sacrifice. A person who enters upon the path laid down in our sacred books, even though he begins with faith alone, is eventually led up to knowledge. And when good works and knowledge are combined, he is in the right road to salvation.

This is the ethics of the Vedantin built upon the solid foundation of his inner self, strengthened as it may be by a knowledge of the *Sastras*. The Vedanta philosophy "has not neglected," to quote the words of Prof. Max Muller, "the important sphere of Ethics, but on the contrary, we find Ethics in the beginning, Ethics in the middle, Ethics in the end, to say nothing of the fact that minds so engrossed with divine things as the Vedanta philosophers, are not likely to fall victims to the ordinary temptations of the world, the flesh and other powers."

THE ETHICS OF THE VEDANTA.*

BY VASUDEVA J. KIRTIKAR.

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PART I.

THE ethical ideal of the Vedanta is at least as high as the Christian ideal, if not higher, and occupies an important place in the Indian system which recognises the doctrine of तत्वमसि as containing the highest philosophic truth.

The greatest error which Christian writers commit (and this can never be too often repeated) consists in their ignoring the distinction which the Vedanta has emphasised and which Philosophy ought always to emphasise in all its teachings. I mean the distinction between the two kinds of knowledge—spiritual and empirical—called in the Vedanta, higher and lower, परा and अपराविद्या. The lower knowledge has reference to the world of sense-experience, while the higher one is spiritual in its character. Both are recognised as essential to the development of man—one as a step to the other. But it would be absolutely unphilosophical to apply considerations which are true in one sphere to the other where they look obviously absurd.

Now, Ethics and Morality admittedly belong to the world of sense-experience, having for their object the development of man in practical life, which necessarily presupposes the dualism of Man and Nature, finding their ultimate reconciliation and explanation in the Highest Reality, by whatever name that Reality may be called.

* Reprint from *The Indian Review.*

Man's relations to the Reality and his social and other relations are all recognised and rightly recognised in this sphere of Relativity; all these relations reign supreme in this sphere. And it is ordained that man must first learn to do the duties which those relations imply and attain, by a course of moral discipline, the ethical ideal, before he can become fit for spiritual enlightenment.

In the ethical system which the Vedanta has formulated, it recognises a principle which is of the highest practical importance, that though religious truth as philosophic truth is and must be one that can only be reached by a course of life and study leading to spiritual enlightenment, and though the religious ideals of *individuals* in a community may and do necessarily vary with the degree of general culture and aptitude for grasping spiritual truths, still, while thus differing in degree, they must have as their basic truth, the highest ideal which is justified by Philosophy and Theology and is capable of realisation at the highest stage.

All considerations which introduce an element of variety in Ethics and Morality are thus subordinated to the highest ideal of तत्त्वमसि, as to which it is always insisted on that it must be the aim of every individual to reach it, if possible.

In this view of the matter the Advaita is as practical in its religious and ethical aspects, as it is speculatively profound in its philosophy. I even venture to think (as I shall show later on) that its teachings, if correctly understood, would be found to be capable of a very wide application and be of practical value as much to the king, to the statesman, to the patriot, and to the citizen, as to the

individual in every walk of life. They furnish an excellent foundation for corporate political action and liberty.

The key-note to the practical ethics of the Vedanta is अभेद, as the key-note to its philosophy and theology is अद्वैत. As अद्वैत means Oneness without a Second, so अभेद means Oneness without any distinction of I and Thou, Mine and Thine.

This word *abheda*, when correctly understood, means Love in its purity and fulness, and the manifestation of the principle denoted by it consists in altruistic action and not in selfish inaction or passivity, as is generally supposed.

In no system has this principle of Altruism been so well appreciated and emphasised as in the Indian Vedanta. The entire life of the Vedantin, it is ordained, must be one of disinterested self-sacrifice.

This idea of sacrifice had its origin in the earliest Vedic literature, where the entire creation was explained as an act of supreme self-sacrifice—the sacrifice of the Supreme Being (पुरुष) that He might "call into existence and contemplate and commune with these dependent images of Himself which form the object of His thought and love (Mandukya). This He did by sacrificing a fourth part of Himself (Purusha Sukta). "Let me sacrifice myself (He said) in living things and all living things in myself," and He thus acquired greatness, self-effulgence and lordship (Shatapatha Br.) He thus limited Himself by this partial sacrifice, that His life might produce and sustain a multiplicity of separate lives (*ib*).

What is essentially suggested by this conception is the pouring out of life for the benefit of others—a truth underlying all evolution, physical as well as spiritual.

Advaita philosophy has thus led to the ethics of Universal Love,—a disinterested sacrifice of the heart in the service of all.

The principle of अभेद teaches man that though he himself is an independent individual apparently, there is the universal principle in him, in common with all other beings, which has made him what he is and binds him to them all as parts of one organism, "as being all moving on one wheel (of universal life,") as "jewels threaded on a string."

It teaches him a most important lesson that he is not a solitary being on earth but his very existence and well-being are tied up with those of others. Wherever he may be, whether alone by himself or otherwise, he is at one with them and bound to help them as they help him. He lives *on* others, and he must in common honesty live *for* them.

Another lesson insisted on with equal stringency is that, while Self-sacrifice and Altruism are the guiding rules of conduct, they must be practised without any personal attachment or hope of reward. Care should always be taken that there is no tinge of egoity in either thought or deed. Duty must be done for duty's sake and dedicated to God (Bhagavad Gita, ix. 27, 28).

The practical value of Kant's categorical imperative is thus fully appreciated as a rule of conduct by the Indian Advaitin, whether he be a householder or a recluse (Shankar's Introduction to *Ait. Up.*) Never flinching from the path of duty, one should try to gain the calm which is unruffled by the guests of fortune and find a home in any scene and live a life of "heaven on earth."

The sentiments presupposed and involved in this conception of *Abheda* are—an absence of all egoity, an absence of all distinction between friend and foe, and between Mine and Thine ; an absence of all attachment to earthly possessions and earthly ties. No rcom is thus left for bad passions to exercise their sway, and in their place come self-abnegation, self-contentment, renunciation, resignation, equanimity, truthfulness, sense of justice—a desire to injure none ; love, compassion, forgiveness, charity, humility and peace.

A certain amount of preparation is necessary to discipline the mind for a correct observance of this principle in practice. The most disquieting or disturbing element in human nature is the element of egoity. It is the most fruitful source of desires for self-satisfaction, and these desires bind man to things earthly, and give rise to passions when they are not satisfied.

Hence the necessity of insisting on the practice of self-denial ; hence also the necessity of the teachings that nothing on earth is man's except his own thoughts and deeds, which ought always to be pure, good and great ; that he should disentangle himself from sense objects ; that his happiness or misery is dependent on himself alone, that he gets only what he has earned, and that, accordingly, he himself is the architect of his fortune and destiny.

He is taught that a life of self-restraint and self-surrender, with indifference to all that is "of the earth, earthly," brings in its train the virtues I have above mentioned, culminating in happiness which no one can take away.

These virtues have necessarily the effect of purifying the heart and making man righteous and religious. But their sphere of influence is not confined to this mundane

existence; they elevate man to higher and higher planes. In every step that he takes towards the attainment of these virtues, he goes through the process of "dying to live"; at every step he goes on living a larger and larger self. (See also 2 Hald. 138.)

He learns first to identify himself with his kith and kin, next his friends and relations, then his caste and country, and so on. In other words, he gradually goes on including within his Self the 'Selfs of others, realising the truth that their happiness is his happiness, and their misery his own misery, and having faith in the assurance that such expansion of the Self is sure ultimately to prove to him its own identity with the Divine Self.'

Such is the analysis of the sentiments involved in the conception of *Abheda* and such exactly is the ethical ideal insisted on in the Vedanta.

One has only to read the Bhagavad Gita to see how wrong it is to suppose that Indian philosophers were simply soaring high in the regions of speculation and cared little for the practical concerns of life.

That little Book,—whether a Revelation or not, in the sense in which orthodox Christians consider their Bible to be—is, indeed, a sacred book in the fullest sense of the term and richly deserves the reverence which is paid to it both in Europe and America.

This is what one reads in Sir Edwin Arnold's preface to his translation of the Bhagavad Gita:—

"In plain but noble language, it unfolds a philosophical system which remains to this day the prevailing Brahminic belief, blending as it does the doctrines of Kapila, Patanjali and the Vedas. So lofty are many of its declarations, so sublime its aspirations, so pure and tender its piety, that Schlegels after his study of the poem, breaks forth into this outburst of delight

and praise* towards its unknown author:—'Reverence to the great [teachers] is counted by the Brahmins among the most sacred duties of piety. Therefore, thou, Oh, most holy Poet, favoured of the Deity, whatever, at length thou art called among mortals, (thou) the author of this Lay, by the prophetic strains of which the mind soars to an eternal and divine height, with a certain unerring pleasure to thee, foremost, I say, I offer my salutation and constant adoration to the vestiges thou hast left."

"Lassen re-echoes this splendid tribute; and, indeed, so striking are some of the moralities here inculcated and so close the parallelism—oftentimes actually verbal—between its teachings and those of the New Testament, that a controversy * has arisen between Pandits and Missionaries on the point whether the author borrowed from Christian sources or the Evangelists and Apostles from him."

Another writer whom we all esteem as one of the truest friends of India, Mrs. Annie Besant, says of this, our precious treasure as follows:—

"Among the priceless teachings that may be found in the great Hindu poem of the Mahabharata, there is none so rare and precious as this, 'The Lord's Song' * * * how many troubled hearts has it quieted and strengthened, how many weary souls has it led to the Lord? It is meant to lift the aspirant from the lower levels of renunciation where objects are renounced to the loftier heights, where desires are dead, and where the Yogi dwells in calm and ceaseless contemplation, while his body and mind are actively employed in discharging the duties that fall to his lot in life. That the spiritual man need not be a recluse, that union with the Divine Life may be achieved and maintained in the midst of worldly affairs, that the obstacles to that union lie not outside us but within us—such is the central lesson of the Bhagavad Gita." (Preface).

The Gita is at once a code of ethics, holding forth the highest spiritual ideal, a code of religion, inculcating a

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* The original is in Latin.

* See the learned introduction by Mr. (afterwards Justice) Telang to his translations of the Gita in verse. Mr. Telang's view that the date of the Gita was anterior to the Christian era is not acceptable to the generality of Christians, who believe that they *wish* to be true. The wonder is they do not say that Laotze and Buddha, too, borrowed from the New Testament, for their teachings present surprising analogies with Christian thought and sentiment.

loving devotion to God, and a philosophy of Advaita beautifully expounding the scientific truth that the dualism involved in the idea of *bhakti* begins to fade with the intensity of the devotional element and ultimately culminates in Unity, where all differentiations must disappear with the development of the altruistic element and the complete realisation of the principle of *Abheda*.

The whole ethics of the Gita may be briefly summed up thus—

(*a*) Renounce things earthly, so that your thoughts and deeds might be free from the tinge of egoity and free also from earthly desires and attachments, which arouse bad passions and lead one astray.

(*b*) Forbear injuring any being.

(*c*) Treat all alike.

(*d*) Help the needy even at a sacrifice to yourself.

(*e*) Do all your duties in a disinterested spirit and as an offering of love to the Supreme Being, in purity of heart.

Even that unsympathetic translator of the Gita, Mr. Thompson, exclaims, "would that in the present selfish age and this northern active clime, it ['the sensible and religious doctrine' of the Gita] could be applied and succesfully carried out by Christians, as we call ourselves. * * * We, too, should have *our* final emancipation, our salvation ever as our only desire, and *our*

* Of course, our deity must be imperfect, and what not, besides! We here are without a Divine Guide! There is only one unerring Preceptor (p. 90) and with that only Christians have been blessed! So none of the other nations in the world dare claim any Divine guide among their own people, and Mr. Thompson warns his readers that no more praise should be accorded to the author of the Gita than is due "to a clever reformer and a wise ethical philosopher" (Introduction, cxxx).

Supreme Being,—so far superior, so far more lovable than the imperfect deity of the Hindu philosopher*—ever as our chief object of love. We, too, should do our duty in this world without self-interest and attachments, and morally renounce the world in the rejection of all interest in it." (Introduction, p. cxxx.)

When such a presentment of the Indian ethical ideal was possible, we had reasons to expect that the attitude of Christian writers generally would be one of admiration, first, because the Buddhistic ideal which is derived from that of the Indian Vedanta and which practically is identical with it * has become attractive to the Western mind ; and, secondly, because of the " strong parallelism—oftentimes actually verbal " between the teachings of the Gita and those of the New Testament.

But, unfortunately, objections have been seriously made to our ideal, and others, too, are possible, of a character similar to what Christian writers are wont to take to the Stoic standard of morality.

It might, for instance, be objected that this ideal is too high and impracticable, or that it is too cold and unemotional, there being an utter absence of religious fervour ; it might be said that it improperly advocates indifference to family ties and to matters concerning the practical life of man, that it discourages the virtue of patriotism and leads to a life of Quietism based upon a pessimistic view of nature, and as such, is of no practical value at all.

The first of these objections has been taken to Stoicism which is much akin to the Indian system in this

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* No doubt Buddhism is less metaphysical and less mystical, but this makes no difference in the *practical* ethics of the two systems.

respect. It is said that the ideal is one of "unapproachable perfection," "unpractical and even impracticable," and that if any one professed himself to have realised it, he would justly expose himself to ridicule.

This is not a matter on which any argument could be usefully employed. Whether such a life as is portrayed in the Bhagavad Gita and other sacred writings of the Hindus is possible, can be best answered by another question whether such a life has, as a matter of fact, been lived or not; and if the answer to this last question be in the affirmative, that ought to settle the other question. The Indian literature—both ancient and modern—teems with instances of complete self-sacrifice and devotion to truth and justice under the most trying circumstances. And I feel "washed in better moral air" in mentioning with reverence and pride the names, for example, of Bali, Janaka, Dasharatha, Rama, Harischandra, Bharat Bhishma and Karna, of Chaitanya, Nanak, Guru Govind, Janardhan, Eknatha, Ramdas and Tukaram and referring generally to other saints who flourished between the 14th and 18th century of the Christian era.

Even in the present degenerate age, instances of saintly characters would not be found wanting, I expect, if one were to take the trouble of travelling in India as Count Tolstoy did in his part of the country in search of instances of Christ life actually lived.

"The best fruits of religious experience (says Prof. James) are the best things that history has to show. [To recount them], to call to mind a succession of such examples [of genuinely strenuous and religious life] is to feel encouraged and washed in better moral air. The spirit of piety and charity * * * of love and humility * * of

severity for one's self, accompanied with tenderness for others—[these] have the same savour in all countries under distant suns and in different surroundings. * * * These devotees have often laid their course so differently from other men, that judging them by worldly law, we might be tempted to call them monstrous aberrations from the paths of nature," (Varieties of Religious Experience, 259—261.)

Here, then, are instances of saintly characters having as a fact, actually lived such a life as is portrayed in the highest ethical ideals.

Turning now to the teachings of the Bible itself, we find Jesus telling his disciples, 'Be ye perfect, even as your Father Which is in heaven is perfect,'; and Mr. Clifford Harrison observes, "If the great words of Jesus of Nazareth are true, true on all planes, as such words of such a speaker must ever be, an ideal for the whole entity of man is proclaimed in them, nothing short of perfection. * * * * *If man once realises his present state and has faith in what the Great Ones of the world have told him and will put it into action, the advancement lies before him.* (Notes on the margin. 214.)

"In the past—and most of all in the far past—there seem to have been individual cases of the faith received and the will exercised into triumphant expression. (*ib.*)

"We will not fear to take the highest possibilities that can be announced to man, nor call them impracticable, because his present condition seems so far removed from them. The first step out of that condition is the admission that it is not final. 'We are near waking when we dream that we dream.' (*ib*, 210.)

"The longing of a soul is the prophecy of its fulfilment (Emerson).

As to the second objection above noted, it is generally supported that the idea of Divine Love is unknown to the Indian Vedanta and the ideal it presents is too severely abstract to touch the heart and the imagination.

"Having convinced himself by rigorous logic of his oneness with Brahma, the Vedantin (says Max Muller) knows no raptures and no passionate love for the Deity."

In other words, प्रेमल भक्ति is said to be an idea of modern growth.

If the Advaitin is taught that he is one with Brahma, if it is also said that, among the aims of self-realisation in this life, Universal Love is one (Jivan Mukti Viveka), it is obviously wrong to suppose that he has no love for Brahma, unless one is prepared to say of him that he does not love himself. In fact, unflinching devotion is laid down as one of the necessary means of acquiring a knowledge of Brahman and of one's identity with it. But, says Prof. Upton :—

"Both in Brahminism and Buddhism, man's ethical ideal is not regarded as a real revelation of the essence and character to the Eternal Self; for, in their view, the *end* of Ethics is not to realise in increasing fulness a sense of *personal relationship* to the Divine Self or the Father within us, but either to so fuse the human self with the Eternal Brahma as to virtually destroy all distinct sense of individual personality, or else, as in the case of Buddhism to achieve that total extinguishing of the desire to live which appears to be equivalent to personal annihilation. The tendency of these systems of Hindu thought is to weaken and efface all personal passions and affections and so to destroy that distinct consciousness of individuality which in their view was not a privilege but rather an undesirable condition from which they sought redemption." (Hibbert Lectures, 1893, 241-2).

I have quoted this page in *extenso*, for it fairly represents the views generally entertained by Christian writers on Indian Vedanta and Indian Theology.

The whole of this passage, however, is misleading, and the error consists in the confusion of the two standpoints

which the Vedanta again and again insists on being always borne in mind—I mean the moral and spiritual—the standpoint of the individual who is moving in this world of relativity—the world of the One and many and the other, the standpoint of the Absolute where all relations lose their significance in the One Eternal life.

To those who cannot transcend the former, the relation of a devotee to his God is the highest fact in their religious experience and this is no doubt the experience of the masses. In their case there is no effacement at all of either the individual ego or of the passions and affections of the devotee.

But as to the philosopher in search of the highest verity, his philosophic sense tells him that the highest ethical ideal is but a means for the attainment of something still higher. Where man has begun " to realise in increasing fulness a sense of personal relationship to the Divine Self," where is this to culminate if such culmination be ever possible, if not in a complete self-surrender of one's own personality ?

Is this " fusion of the human self with the Divine Self " to be condemned as virtually destroying all distinct sense of individual personality ? If Love means the feeling and consciousness of identity. "I in thee and thou in me" (2 Hald 241); if love is implied in our desire to realise unity (D' Alviella,) is not that love the greatest and truest, when the lover entirely forgets himself to *become* the beloved ?

In other words, is not the progressive self-surrender to the immanent and self-revealing Divine Being pre-supposed as an accomplished fact in one who has reached the highest ethical ideal ; and what value would such an one, at that stage, attach to his individual personality ? Are

his passions and affections weakened and effaced or purified and ennobled? Why did Jesus teach man "to deny himself, to hate father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yea, his own life also"? What is the meaning of the Christian saying "He that *loses* life shall *have* it"? Are not the same sentiments re-echoed by Christian divines. "The Self, the I, the me, and the like, all belong to the Evil Spirit. * * Be simply and wholly bereft of Self" (Theol. Germ. 73).

The Bishop of Ripon, in *The Hibbert Journal* for April, 1905, writes:—

"Christ is born, and the Christ spirit must be formed in men; Christ dies, and so *the self in man must be crucified* for how can love live alongside the life of Self? Christ rises, and the true Self is only found *when the old self has been crucified*" *

Is there no virtual destruction of all distinct sense of individual personality in any of the above utterances?

It may at once be conceded, however, that *passionate* love there is not and could not be at a stage which presupposes the possession of true knowledge (Gnosis, ज्ञान but love it certainly is,—only ennobled by ज्ञान by which is understood spiritual enlightenment. It is spiritual, but it is not the less love because there is no display of emotion in it. "Love must be guided and taught of knowledge * * * This love so maketh a man one with God

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* The italics in the above passage are mine. It is gratifying to find Christian theologians are willing now to interpret the Christian dogma by sentiments like those which the Vedanta has always entertained. The Supreme self-surrender, the Neo-platonic idea of the Logos, God's descent unto him and love for him, the Crucifixion of Jesus, that is, of the lower egohood in man, his Resurrection or the rise of the Christ, that is, of the true Self in him, and his ascension or union with the Godhead—all these become intelligible when thus interpreted.

that he can never more be separated from Him" (Theol. Germ. 159.) It is Love in its purity and fulness.

Devotional or what is called emotional Love is considered by the Vedanta as a means of acquiring spiritual knowledge. (Shankar, B. Gita, XIII. 10, &c., &c.). And there cannot be the slightest doubt that devotion, practised in the attitude and under the conditions prescribed in that behalf, must bring in spiritual enlightenment and ultimately of a surety lead to salvation (see, for instance, B. Gita, Chap. XII).

Nor is our belief in such salvation a vain one. "The Gita (says Barnett) has a gospel to deliver, telling of a consecration of life's every work to the selfless service of God and an Infinite Love that at every place and every time pours forth its illimitable grace to all that seek after it."

The next objection noticed above has reference to the indifference which the Vedanta advocates to things earthly, to earthly attachments, etc.

It is said that a philosophy or theology which insists on the abandonment of all earthly concerns, on the killing of all passions and desires for the purpose of obtaining union with God, simply means an attempt to go empty-handed into an empty house, to be there "left as it were alone with God without any world to mediate" between the two, with the result that "in the esctatic vision of the Absolute, the light of reason is extinguished." This is what Dr. Edward Caird has said of the Stoic system.

We in India also consider it a true and a noble lesson that nothing on earth is ours except our own thoughts and deeds, which we carry with us; that all things pertaining to our empiric consciousness are "of the earth, earthly," transient and ephemeral—wealth, fame, honours,

even our domestic affections and bonds of friendship—that all these have no doubt their limited aims and ends and serve as steps in our progressive development and enlightenment; but for higher and spiritual ends they have to be left behind.

This is, indeed, our ideal; but the question is whether, in following it, we strip ourselves of all that we had and try to reach an abstract emptiness and delude ourselves into the belief that we have attained the goal or that we are possibly on the way to it, when, in reality, we are only in a state of spiritual nudity and physical nothingness.

If spiritual enlightenment pre-supposes the transcendence of the ethical standpoint as an accomplished fact, if man at this stage has already transcended the world of sense-experience, if, at this stage, as Fichte says, "all wrappings disappear and the world passes away for him with her dead principle,"* or if, as Shankar says, the world appears as "melting away like the imagery of a dream," of what value is the meditation of such a world at that highest stage? Of what value is a toy-elephant to one who understands that it is only a toy? Of what value is a diagram (and that too an inaccurate one) to one who is face to face, so to speak, with the original Reality?

Again, what is the meaning of the remark that "the light of reason is extinguished?" The question here raised can only be answered with the help of what Principal John Caird terms 'the hidden logic of a spiritual process.' If what the learned Master of Balliol calls reason is extinguished, he may be assured that something better and nobler is acquired in this process of transformation. But why assume the extinction of reason, when it is admitted

* See Ved. Sutras, III. 2. 21; 2 Thib-163.

that nothing is annihilated in the process of development but all is assimilation and transformation ? Why not say that the potential university of reason becomes a realised and accentuated fact in such a case ?

Similarly, as to Passions and Desires, when the Vedanta advocates Self-denial as a virtue, it does not ask us to destroy the senses or the sense-objects, but to keep the senses under proper control, while moving among sense-objects (B. Gita II, 64). Nor are we asked to demolish all the desires, as is popularly believed; for this is impossible in the very nature of things. To demolish all desire would mean the cessation of all activity, which is absolutely impossible. (B. Gita, III, 4 to 7).

No doubt, the senses are described as very powerful, trying impetuously to carry away the heart of even a prudent man who strives to restrain them (B. Gita, II, 60). No doubt, also, that desires and passions are said to be the greatest enemies of man (B. Gita, III, 37—39).

But all these are a part of our nature, though only a perverted part, and cannot be eradicated or plucked out as thorns, in one's body. They are not at peace with man, it is true, but yet they cannot part company and virtue consists in man's victory over them not by killing but by converting these enemies into friends.

In other words, what is meant is, that what constitutes the lower nature of man should be made to do higher and nobler work. As was well said by a celebrated poet, let the object of काम (desire) be devotion to God, let क्रोध (anger) be employed to control the senses, etc., and when so employed, they are " purified and idealised by being made the natural basis of a higher spiritual satisfaction "; they are brought in harmony with the true and assimi-

lated with it. This is exactly the idea which the Bhagavad Gita means to convey in VI, 5-6.

उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत् ।
आत्मैवह्यात्मनो बंधुरात्मैव रिपुरात्मनः ॥ ६ ॥
बंधुरात्मात्मनस्तस्य येनात्मैवात्मनाजितः।
अनात्मनस्तु शत्रुत्वे वर्तेतात्मैव शत्रुवत् ॥ ६ ॥

Even the utterances of Shankar, the greatest Advaitin, may well be referred to as showing what, according to him also, is meant by the " lifting up of the self by the self."

It is the मन which creates objects of desire, and give rise to egoity and attachment to things earthly and these make man a ceaseless wanderer in the phenomenal world (संसार). Pursuit of external objects being checked, evil desires are also checked, tranquillity of the mind thus results and from this arises the vision of the Paramatman. Purify, therefore, the मन and strengthen it for its fitness for मुक्ति. This is attainable by the performance of one's duties and this world would then be to such an one as naught. (Viveka Chudamani).

But why should the indifference, advocated in the Indian systems, to things earthly, to earthly attachments, &c., find no sympathetic response from modern Western thought? Is it in any degree worse than the indifference advocated in the sacred writings of Christianity and by Christian saints in the name of Jesus?

" If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself* * and follow Me " (Matt. XVI. 24). If he hate not his father and mother and wife and children, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple " (Luke, XIV. 26).

" So long as a man clingeth unto the elements and fragments of this world, (and, above all, to himself) and

holdeth converse with them, and maketh great account of them, he is deceived and blinded." (Theol. Germ. 66). "A man must begin by denying himself and willingly forsaking all things for God's sake * * He who will have the one must let the other go." (*ib.* 45-46).

"Eschew bodily pleasures and rest in Me alone * * * Desire to despise thyself, break thy appetites, and crush out all thy pleasures and desires" (Suso) "Disengage thyself so completely from all creatures in all things which might hinder all creatures in all things which might hinder thine eternal salvation * * There is no other way, however hard this may appear. * * * We must divest ourselves of external occupations and establish ourselves in a tranquil stillness of soul by an energetic resignation. as if we were dead to self and thought only of the honor of Christ and his heavenly Father" (*ib*).

It is difficult for Christian writers to escape the criticism which they are pleased so freely to pass on others. Mr. Thompson, who has translated the Bhagavad Gita, feels that some of the passages above quoted come "from the mouth of the only unerring preceptor," meaning Jesus Christ, and he explains in his note, to B. G., XIII. 9, where similar sentiments (but couched in much milder language) occur, that such passages should not be construed literally ; "they only mean that where one's salvation requires it, even the nearest earthly ties must be disregarded." (Thompson's B. G., p. 90).

This explanation is only superficial. The meaning of such teachings involving indifference to family ties, to earthly attachments and objects lies much deeper. When a person has learnt the lesson of "dying to live," his self in the process goes on becoming larger and larger and in the end it includes within itself the selfs of all other beings. The individual identifies himself with all. With him humanity is a big brotherhood, (वसुधैव कुटुंबकम्), so that the particular relationships of father, mother, &c., fall in

the shade; there is here exclusion of the relations *as such* no doubt, but there is their inclusion in the larger whole. He dies to them as he dies to himself, to live a larger self. He thus rises "above all considerations connected with the mere *personality* of those around him, and so is free from all the injustice and partiality which ordinary love so often brings in its train."

This is exactly what the Vedanta means when it desires the extinction of the अहंवृत्ति (egoity); what is aimed at is not the destruction but the elevation or transformation of the individual Self, which brings with it the spiritual capacity of looking upon all alike समदृष्टि (B. G. II. 54-71 &c.). It means the expansion * of the Self to become the Self of all. There is no "emptiness" in such a conception, where the Self is conceived as becoming, in the course of its development, so far expanded as to embrace within it the self's of all beings. The language of one who has reached this state, says Vasishta, is :—

"Self fills the whole universe * * within, without, below, above, everywhere all is Self, here and there; there is no Not-Self anywhere * * . There is nothing which is not in me. What should I desire, when the whole world is one web of Universal Consciousness." (See Jivan Mukti Viveka, 140.)

Similarly, says Shankar :—

"He who knows the Oneness of the Self has no desires, because for him there is no object to be desired; as his Atman is himself, he cannot desire it. The being centred in Self is emancipation. This proceeds from [spiritual] knowledge alone * * No doubt the variety of *Karma* prescribed in the Shastras are useful as aids to knowledge" (Tait. Up., I. 12. 1,)

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* I have advisedly adopted the above mode of expression to make any meaning intelligible to those who are not Advaitins. From the Advaita point of view, it is not the Self that is expanded for the Self is eternal and changeless; the expansion here referred to means the gradual removal of the veil of Nescience.

It is interesting to read the following description of the Indian Sage given in the Mahabharata :—

"He who behaves towards all creatures as if he is their kinsman, who has acquired the knowledge of the Supreme Spirit, who is free from all passions and is absorbed in the knowledge of the Self, he who is compassionate, whom all creatures have ceased to fear, who abstains from injuring others in thought, speech or deed, he who is free from the bondage of desire, he into whose mind all sorts of desires enter like diverse streams falling into the ocean without being able to transcend its limits by their discharge—it is such an one who who gains Peace—not he who cherishes desires for earthly objects."

And those who have studied the psychic constitution of man tell us that the powers of such a personage become so far developed that while they are far-reaching, they are also so very tender and sensitive, that they are capable of responding to "every thrill in the outside universe." The person, who has reached this degree of enlightenment, "feels and answers to everything and, just because he desires nothing for himself, is able to give everything to all." Such an one, it is said, "becomes more and more a channel of Divine Life to the world ; he asks nothing save to be a channel with wider and wider bed along which the great Life may flow, and his only wish is that he may become a larger and larger vessel with less of obstacle in himself to hinder the outward pouring of the Life ; working for nothing save to be of service." (Annie Besant's *Karma*, p. 69).

So, too, says Shankar in his Viveka Chudamani :—

"The great and peaceful ones live regenerating the world like the coming of spring ; and after having crossed the ocean of embodied existence, help those who try to do the same thing, without personal motives. It is the innate character of the great ones to remove the sufferings of others, as it is the character of the moon to allay the pains of those who are suffering from the intense heat of the sun."

Every great man is a living power; he is a most impressive personality, while living and is, in a sense, everywhere शरीर्यप्यशरीर्येष परिच्छिन्नोऽपि सर्वगः (Shankar); and his influence on mankind continues even when he is physically dead.

"Such men (says Dr. E. Caird) seem still to grow beyond the end which hides them from our eyes. * * * The great man in his lifetime stands before his contemporaries as an external image of excellence which may, indeed, awaken a new spirit in those who are able, even partially, to appreciate it; but when the outward presence is removed, the awakened spirit reproduces the inmost reality of fact in an idealised vision, which is truer than anything seen with the eyes of sense * * * and this new idealised image in turn reacts in further developments of the same spiritual energy which produced it" (2 Evol. Rel. 227; see also Tiele and D'Alviella).

And why is it that such men command such an influence over people among whom their lot is cast? What is it that makes them the pioneers of religious movements? It is the *life they live*; it is the spiritual light which shines forth through their life (their aura, as an occultist might say) which directly touches the vision and pierces the heart of every man who comes within its all embracing radiating influence. Their very presence "changes sorrow into joy, fear into courage, despair into hope, weakness into power." (See Trine: also Jivan Mukti Viveka.)

Inspired with the Divine Spirit, full of the Infinite Atman and Atman alone, endowed with a vision which pierces through things visible to things invisible, realising the Infinite everywhere in this finite existence, these men live the life of the Infinite, and what they think, will and act is what the Infinite thinks, wills and acts through them. (Tiele). They embrace within their fold the universe and all that is contained within it. It is this life

which makes their impressive personality a living one ; it is these who have really conquered death.

It is these who, though they may appear to be doing little, in reality do much—much that is good and noble and of everlasting interest. In India the Upanishads, Aranyakas, &c., are a living monument of the work done by such "choice specimens of humanity."

Such is the ideal of the Indian Sage and the Asceticism of the Indian Vedanta is no other than what the sage's life represents.

But unfortunately, as said of the Greek Cynics, many sturdy beggars, and ill-conditioned vagrants take up as a convenient disguise, "the ascetic's staff and mantle" and bring into disrepute the entire scheme of Hindu society and with it the wisdom that has planned that scheme.

PART II.

There is undoubtedly a good deal of misconception about Indian asceticism, and this misconception is due partly to the degenerated form in which it is at present observable in practice and partly to the garbled accounts of unsympathetic and prejudiced Christian writers, who pose themselves as authorities on this question.

These writers invariably associate with asceticism the ideas of mortification of the flesh and retirement into solitude with no really noble end in view. The Indian ascetic is always represented as a person who renounces the world as a pessimist and seeks refuge in a jungle from the vicissitudes of life, as a discontented soul, and ekes out his existence there, doing nothing really useful. He is sometimes described as "a bundle of negations."

Now, this is not a correct view of Indian asceticism. The Hindu system in its pristine purity did not enjoin either mortification of the flesh or bare retirement into solitude, any more than Christianity in its pristine form did.

The Indian ascetic is called a तपस्विन or संन्यासिन् or योगिन् but none of these words connotes the notions so freely accredited to Indian asceticism by foreign writers.

No doubt rigorous practices involving mortification of the flesh &c., are prescribed in what is called *hatha yoga* (हठयोग) but these practices are generally resorted to by the uncultured and have always been severely condemned by right-minded thinkers.

It is only *Raja Yoga* that is countenanced and recommended and here what is said about the life of a तपस्विन or संन्यासिन or योगिन् is that it is one of self-sacrifice, that is, of a sacrifice of the heart by self-surrender and self-abnegation for the good of others. A true Yogin is described as " becoming delightfully satisfied in the fulfilment of all duties, and self-realisation of the truth, 'I am Brahma, the eternal source of all transcendent bliss." The whole practice of *Raja Yoga* breathes a spirit of moderation in exercise, such as might, instead of causing bodily pain and distraction of attention, be helpful to concentration of the mind and a proper meditation on the Atman. A Yogin, says Vivekanand, must always avoid the two extremes of luxury and austerity.

Then as to retirement into solitude, that, too, could be justified by the laws of psychic phenomena. If any individual reached an exceedingly high degree of spiritual development, rendering his constant presence in society

hurtful, he, in his wisdom, would naturally shift his residence and retire into solitude, both for his own sake and for the sake of his brethren whom he is bound to help. This is not, however, a matter which we, on the lower plane, could understand or appreciate.

But this much we must admit that the kind of development above-mentioned is possible only in the case of a person who has passed through all the lower stages of social development, fulfilled all his duties to his kith and kin, to his caste and country. At this stage, therefore, he would naturally turn his attention to the investigation and solution of the most important problems of Life, and the attainment, by practice in spiritual devotion, of the spiritual end, which is our goal.

The scheme of Hindu society wisely ordains retirement into solitude, not for a life of inaction, as is erroneously supposed, but for work in the interest of philosophy and the gratification of man's highest aspirations here. What useful work our forest hermits did in ancient times, our Upanishads and Aranyakas amply testify.

At the same time, it must be borne in mind that if any one took this step of retirement before having fulfilled the duties attached to his station in life, and before having passed through a proper course of moral discipline and become fit for spiritual enlightenment, he was liable, as a rule, to be condemned as a hypocrite, just as a false *tathagat* was, in the Buddhistic system; for no man could become a *sannyasin* or *yogin* merely by abandoning his duties and retiring into solitude. In every true *sannyas*, the first essential is the performance of one's duties in a spirit of devotion and complete selflessness. (B. Gita, xviii. 7, 9, 10, 11).

It must no doubt be admitted that passages do frequently occur in our sacred writings to the effect that the highest stage of spiritual enlightenment is that of a *paramahamsa* परमहंस, and, in the case of such a person, it is often said that "for him all *karma* कर्म has ceased."

And because such a high ideal is placed before man, some writers think that the teachings of the Vedanta might "fail to call out and strengthen the many qualities required for the practical side of life, and that it might raise the human mind to a height from which the most essential virtues of social and political life might dwindle away into mere phantoms."

Yes, there might be this danger, if one ignored the distinction between the two paths, which the Vedanta considers as most essential to be borne in mind as a key to a correct reading of its teachings—the two paths, *viz.*, of प्रवृत्ति and निवृत्ति—the one as a preparation for the other.

If one fully realised to oneself the fact that one who wants to go to the top of a hill must *climb* and not fly to reach it, there would be no danger of the social and political virtues dwindling away into mere phantoms. All these virtues have to be exercised and exercised as "a consecration of life's work to the selfless service of God," before the highest point could be reached, at which eternal Bliss and Peace reign supreme and from which there is no longer any return to earthly life for one's own personal development and perfection.

यस्मिन्गता न निवर्तंति भूयः
यद्गत्वा न निवर्तंते तद्धाम परमंमम

If this condition is deemed unattainable and if therefore, the position itself condemned by Christian writers as

meaning a useless life of Quietism, the teachings of Jesus, too, would have to be condemned on that ground.

> The Kingdom of God, set forth by Jesus is, (says Professor Pfleiderer) in sharpest contrast to the kingdoms of this world and their glory; which must be renounced by whoever would win the Kingdom of Heaven."—the renunciation here referred to being of all earthly ties and earthly possessions (Matt. xix 29; Luke, xiv 25).

And Jesus adds, as to one who wins the Kingdom of God :—

" I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go out no more." (Rev. III, 12).

The truth is that when it is said that " *Karma* for the spiritually perfect has ceased," it does not mean that he, from that time, becomes a cypher or a block of stone. It means that action in his case and for *his* own individual enlightenment has ceased; having reached the highest condition, he has nothing to desire for *himself*, nothing to do for *himself*; but for that very reason, as stated before, there is much which he has to do, and that is, in helping those who are on the lower planes and need an uplifting hand.

If God acts thus for the good of His creatures (B. Gita, III 22-25), why should not man do the like ? If all are dependent upon each other as parts of an Organism and if the spiritually enlightened one has realised to himself his identity with all that forms this universal brotherhood, it would be a contradiction in terms to say that he has, by the very reason of his spiritual culture, become a useless member of that brotherhood.

The Bhagavad Gita emphasises this lesson in Chap.III, 17-25.

It must, indeed, be conceded that the highest stage, contemplated by the Vedanta, is beyond the reach of ordi-

nary mortals. The path of the *Paramahamsa* (परमहंस) is, indeed, very difficult. It is said to be "sharp as a razor" (Kath. Up. III. 14) and hardly one that the masses can be expected to tread.

Sri Krishna tells Arjuna :—

Among thousands of men scarce one striveth for perfection; of the successful strivers scarce one knoweth Me in essence.

मनुष्याणां सहस्रेषु कश्चिद्यततिसिद्धये ।
यततामपि सिद्धानां कश्चिन्मां वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ॥[B.G. VII 3.

Nor is one life enough for the purpose. As Suso, the German Mystic, puts it:

Be sure thou wilt have to endure many deaths before thou canst put thy nature under the yoke.

But ultimate success is assured to us as being within our reach.

The religious and ethical truths which are of immediate practical value to man belong to the lower plane—the plane of the One and Many—the sphere of Relativity, as I have elsewhere often termed it, and here all is activity and no Quietism.

But one must not forget that the activities implied in this sphere, if well directed, with the ideals of *Advait* and *Abheda* always present to the mind, prepare the way for a higher and holier life. "Our lower civilisation is but a preparation for the higher."

These ideals of *advaita* and *abheda* are as useful to social and political progress as they are to the progress of the individual. The idea of 'dying to live' and of 'living a larger and larger self' are sufficiently suggestive of higher and nobler aspirations.

As stated by Rev. Charles Kingsley in connection with European Mysticism, I might, with equal truth, assert that

the great spiritual laws, upon which the Vedanta has founded its practical Ethics

> hold just as good in the family, in the market, in the senate, in the study, aye, in the battlefield itself; and teach (man) the way to lead, in whatever station of life he may be placed, a truly manlike, because a truly Godlike, life.

The teachings of the Vedanta are as practical as they are speculative. There is a vast amount of sacred literature intended to convey truths of a practical character to the popular mind. Of this I may here mention only the two grand Epics—the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. These two Epics contain a great deal of practical teaching with practical illustrations, founded on the Vedantic ideals of *advait* and *abheda*. Great ideals are placed before the people in such a popular form, that very few, indeed, could be found who are unfamilar with the episodes of the great personages related in them or with the truths intended to be conveyed by them. They furnish topics for *kirtans* and *bhajans* in every Hindu temple; they are in the mouth of every rustic, young and old, whose whole life is influenced thereby. It is impossible to estimate this influence on their daily life, but it cannot be denied that it is wide and far-reaching.

The Bhagavad Gita is another sacred book which I ought to mention in this connection, as being one of the best exponents of the practical aspect of the Vedanta.

To begin with, the practical character of the Gita is prominently observable in its lessons on devotion (भक्ति). While recognising to the fullest extent the philosophical ideal of तत्वमसि, it takes note of the broad fact that all men are not of the same intellectual calibre to be able to grasp this ideal and appreciate and realise it, all at once.

Man is, accordingly, told that the Absolute and Unrelated cannot at once be intelligible to him, for it requires the most abstract contemplation and elevation of thought, which is beyond the ordinary powers of his intellect to accomplish ; that till that stage of intellectual and spiritual attainment is reached, he must content himself with contemplating and worshipping, as God, the Supreme Essence as a differentiated entity in Its manifestations in Its own works throughout the Universe, taking any of such manifestations as a *symbol*, through which to reach It in a proper, moral and religious attitude.

Some of our Christian critics denounce this as a "conscious alliance with falsehood, the deliberate propagation of lies."

I will deal with this objection in my article on "Hinduism and Its strength." It is enough, for the present, to say that, if the use of symbols to explain truths, which cannot otherwise be grasped be hypocrisy, we must bid farewell to all the methods of teachings which we have adopted in Schools, and hold the teachers as so many liars, when, for instance, in teaching Geometry, the points and lines drawn on the School board, they represent as the Geometrical points which are without magnitude, and Geometrical lines which are simply length without breadth! Euclid himself, too, would be a huge liar, in this view of the matter.

If these critics think that Christian Churches have done well in trampling down and destroying the lower worships, instead of explaining them, and in insisting upon one uniform standard, irrespective of whether it is suited to men of every grade of culture, we wish them joy.

We here think differently. If we provide food to human beings according to their physical capacity to digest

it, if we regulate the education of the people according to their intellectual capacities and needs, we think we ought to observe the same law in respect of their religious and spiritual culture.

A writer in the *Hibbert Journal*, in July 1906 (p. 747), very pertinently says:—

> "Children are compelled to say, by heart, sentences the meaning of which they cannot possibly know. Can one wonder at the slow progress of Christianity, or at the lukewarm interest of laymen in the Church, when, as babes, they are fed with the strongest meat, and their appetite and digestions ruined ?"

We here make "our abstract religious conceptions popular by means of symbols, pictures and images," never forgetting, at the same time, to impress the truth that these are but symbols and pictures, and that the various beliefs and worships and divinities are but manifestations of Brahma—the only Eternal Verity in the Universe. So that, when a Hindu worships his divinity by symbols, pictures or images, he does not worship the symbol, picture or image but the metaphysical verity underlying it, all these being but manifestations of that Eternal Verity.

As suggested by an educated Hindu, the analogy of a ladder with innumerable rungs well and correctly represents our position. Each individual soul stands on the rung suited to itself; and no person has a right to say that the rung on which he himself stands is the only true one and the others, false; there is a germ of truth even in the lowest layers of superstition and each one must climb the ladder by stages and not jump over the intermediate rungs to go to the top.

This very fact has rendered the religion of the Hindus elastic and tolerant; it adapts and assimilates the lower

forms of worship, instead of endeavouring to destroy them (Lyall).

The rules about लोकसंग्रह given in the Bhagavad-gita are also suggestive of profound wisdom. Of these the first and foremost is, "Let no wise man unsettle the mind of ignorant people attached to action."

It is wisely ordained that the wise must take the ignorant masses on and on *with* them, being always *with* them and *of* them; that they should act prudently and try to purify their conduct, first, improve their moral character and aptitude for grasping and appreciating higher truths; well remembering that it would be most imprudent and useless to force higher truths on them, without preparing the ground for their reception.

All our readers are probably not aware of the story of Moses and the Shepherd. The shepherd in his prayer was using the language of an anthropomorphic God, and offering to serve him with food, clothing, etc., when Moses rebuked him saying that God was a spirit, and needed no such ministrations. The effect of this rebuke was that the shepherd lost his God and had none other given him, whom he could devoutly worship.

A voice from heaven was (then) heard, saying, 'O Moses, wherefore have you driven away my servant?' Your office is to reconcile my people with me, not to drive them away from me. I have given to each race different usages and forms of praising and adoring me. I have no need of their praises, being exalted above all such needs. I regard not the words that are spoken, but the heart that offers them. I do not require fine words, but a burning heart. Men's ways of showing devotion to me are various, but so long as the devotions are genuine, they are accepted.

The above is a complete echo of the sentiments contained in the Bhagavad-Gita.

With every advance in intelligence and moral culture each one is sure to find explanations which will satisfy him, and there will be a corresponding improvement in his religious attitude.

Thus, with the backbone of the philosophical ideal the religion of the Vedanta, in a thoroughly tolerant spirit, opens the path to every one who is desirous of salvation. Mr. Rajam Aiyar rightly calls it "a grand Religious Republic of the Vedanta."

Then as to social relations and the duties those relations impose, throughout the book, when it speaks of *duties*, the Bhagavad-Gita tells us that we are bound to do the duties attached to the position in which we are placed.

It first tells us that man's mission on earth in his embodied existence is *action* (कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते)—not one single moment of his life can anybody pass without it. (नहि कश्चित्क्षणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत्).

The entire humanity is divided into four classes according to the kind of Karma and the degree of development which have determined the situation each one occupies in this life (गुणकर्मविभागशः). The duties thus assigned to man constitute his *Dharma* and these must be religiously observed. One who has the *satvic* (सात्त्विक) element preponderating in him is bound to do the work of spiritual instruction and of elevation of man's character in every thing that pertains to his moral, religious and spiritual welfare. One who has the *rajasic* (राजसिक) element preponderating in him must do all that requires activity ; all political activities belong to this sphere. Commercial activity belongs to the third class ; and the last and lowest

class represents the people in whom the *tamas guna* तामसगुण predominates, and who, therefore, stand by far in the greatest need of protection from the higher classes, while in a state of serfdom and bondage.

Each man, says the Gita, must actively do the duties peculiar to his station in life and these he cannot well neglect, for any neglect on his part would create a hindrance in the way of his further development in the right direction. This would constitute his sin, bringing its own punishment with it.

"Fight and conquer or die in the struggle against iniquity and wickedness" is the teaching rung into Arjuna's ears at the end of every Discourse. Fight in the interests of dethroned Virtue, and recover the crown for her by conquest or die in the attempt. Unmindful of earthly ties, fight bravely, not for bread nor for money nor for fame; fight in the name of Duty which is thy allotted lot.

Nor is this teaching in the least inconsistent with the other teachings which enjoin Non-Resistance to evil, the return of good for evil, etc. It is only in the Indian Vedanta that such teachings, though apparently inconsistent with each other, are found side by side; and the key to their correct interpretation consists in a strict observance of the distinction which I have repeatedly emphasised in my writings.

All social duties necessarily imply relations and active conduct for the maintenance and development of those relations. Sri Krishna's advice to man to fight is perfectly intelligible and proper, from the social point of view. Man must fulfil his duties in his mundane existence, before he can become fit to enter the region, wherein all relations lose their significance.

Society as a whole can never be expected to enter this region, all at once or simultaneously. This world of sense-experience, wherein man has to struggle for existence and for his supposed happiness, cannot be transformed into a "Kingdom of God" all at once. It contains beings of various degrees of culture, and, though they all may be on their onward march, they cannot be expected to reach the goal, all simultaneously.

Activity must, therefore, continue to be their watchword and a *sine qua non*.

It must also be remembered that our life in this world is one of probation and difficulties—difficulties arising from wickedness and evil; fighting to conquer this wickedness and evil must, therefore, be one of our first duties to society.

Each individual has to pass through this struggle and become fit, by a course of moral discipline, for spiritual enlightenment. He has to form his character, which implies the improvement of himself as well as of his environment, and for that purpose resistance to evil becomes a necessity and has to be practised.

But in practising it, he ought not to forget the higher teachings, 'Resist not evil,' 'Return good for evil,' etc.

Man's duty, accordingly, is to resist evil and resent injury, if the interests of any member of society, including himself as such member, are jeopardised or affected by such injury; but in doing so, he should try even to reclaim the evil doer, remembering that he, too, is a member of that organism.

In other words, while non-resistance to evil ought to be the ideal before man and is insisted on, as a rule of

individual conduct, so far as possible, the exigencies of society would seem to require an adjustment, from time to time, of the several relations involved in it and, therefore, justify resistance to evil for such adjustment.

In this view of the matter, it is through Resistance that man has to go to the higher plane, where Non-Resistance to evil is the rule. There is therefore in reality no antagonism between the two principles of Resistance and Non-Resistance to evil, just as there is none between Egoism and Altruism. They are only two stages in Evolution.

Duties, says the Gita, must be performed, by man in a spirit of complete ' selflessness " with the fact ever present to his mind that the good of all is his own good. Duties, begun on the lower rungs of the ladder may go on expanding and embracing what are generally known as the duties of citizenship and patriotism and eventually duties to the entire humanity and to all other beings and things, the principle of *abheda* being the truth underlying them all.

Even a whole nation can become a model nation, if this principle of *abheda* were rightly apprehended and correctly reduced into practice. The individualism and self-seeking, which the present materialistic age unfortunately fosters, must give way before a life of altruism ; the people under proper culture must begin to feel that each one lives not for himself but for the common good of all ; their sense of egoism must become so far expanded that the interest of the people may become the interest of each one individually. In such a case the people would identify themselves with their king " merging their will in the will of their monarch, and ascribing their virtues to the virtue of the king." The king, on the other hand, would realise " the nation, as it

were, within himself, as a company of souls grouped with mutual bonds into an ordered host for the higher purposes of divine economy."

Nor is this a mere fanciful picture of a model nation, impossible of actual realisation. History has furnished only recently an excellent illustration of such a nation. I mean Japan; and the words I have quoted in the preceding paragraph from the *Theosophical Review*, for October, 1905, refer to that country.

Here, again, is an interesting statement bearing on the point in an article in the *Hibbert Journal* for October 1905, contributed by Prof. Anesaki, of the Imperial University of Japan. After referring to the teachings of his spiritual teachers which enjoin altruism and the sacrifice of every thing to the *Dharma*, the learned Professor observes :—

> These were no mere teachings but the morality inculcated by them has tuned the actual life so deeply, that self-sacrifice for the sake of one's ideal has become the spirit of our national life. Applied to the morality of the warrior class, it has caused many warriors to die gladly for the sake of their lord or of the nation. The spirit of self-sacrifice is the vital force of our morality and has manifested its power during the present war most remarkably.

Here is an instance highly suggestive of more than a bare possibility of realisation of the Vedantic ideal—an instance in which we find conquest going on " hand in hand with gentleness and self-control."

The Bhagavad Gita itself gives instances of Kings leading an active life even after their spiritual enlightenment. King Janaka is mentioned by name in III. 20. "He fought battles, improved commerce and industry and is reported to have been one of the justest kings of the world, and withal one of the greatest Indian Vedantins." (*Rajam*

Aiyar.) Rama, the hero of the Ramayana, is another instance; and a number of other instances might also be found showing that *kingly duties were not considered to be in any way incompatible with spiritual culture.*

"Rulers ought to be philosophers," says Plato; and some of our Upanishads show that Kshatriya kings were the custodians of philosophical knowledge and Brahmins went to them for acquiring it.

There is also abundant evidence to show that, side by side with the high ideals which the Indian Vedanta placed before man, there existed institutions in India, even in the pre-Buddhistic period, for the education of the young—male and female—in which all the most noble and heroic virtues were taught, both in theory and practice—institutions intended for philosophical, moral, religious and political instruction, for the elevation of the disciples 'in spirit and in action'—'institutions somewhat similar to those which were founded by Pythagoras in Crotona and other places in the sixth century B. C.

And, what is more important still, the teachers, who volunteered their services in this mission, without any pecuniary gain to themselves, were the very men whom European writers are wont to condemn as so many 'bundles of negation'—I mean, the sages and ascetics, who had renounced the world and who, having nothing to desire for themselves, were ever devoted to serve others, in order to elevate them to their own heights.

How literally true was it that the Great Ones, instead of being the Masters, were the servants of the people among whom their lot was cast.

If institutions, such as I have above mentioned, existed as a fact in ancient India, it might safely be in-

ferred that they had a most salutary effect on the society in which they flourished and the government which tolerated and encouraged them. If members of the royal household were among the disciples attending these institutions, if the sons of the nobility and commonalty, so to speak, all received instruction on one common ground—instruction based on the broad ideals of *advaita* and *abheda*,—such instruction must naturally have had a good effect upon both the rulers and the ruled.

The relations between the two must naturally have been all that could possibly be wished—the ruler acting with wisdom like an unselfish and loving father towards his children, and the ruled serving him in a right loyal spirit with devotion and love. Filial piety and loyalty would, in such a case, be completely united, as they are seen united in Japan at the present day (*Hibbert Journal.*)

We have thus in the Vedanta a philosophy which has never been "excelled in its spiritual heights or in speculative profundity," and an ethical and religious ideal which is eternally and universally true and capable of *practical* application.

It has a power to strengthen the souls of the noblest man for "action and endurance." Owing to its "firm grasp of the central idea that there is a rational principle in the world, which is one in nature with the self-conscious intelligence within us," it has been able to make every thing bend to it. It recognises a principle of a highly practical character, which is legitimately deducible from it. The noble idea of the entire universe being one big brotherhood वसुधैवकुटंबकम् finds its justification and explanation in that central idea—a brotherhood, in which all

distinctions of Mine and Thine lose their significance and in the interests of which all are held bound to co-operate, sinking their individual personality altogether.

How grand is this conception of वसुधैवकुटुंबकम्. In the words of Principal J. Caird, it is not a fantastic dream of the theorist but a noble ideal.

If both the Rulers and the Ruled were only to realise the importance of the truth implied in it and shape their conduct accordingly, what a tremendous revolution in the religious and political attitude of both would result!

Our country would, then, be veritably a "Heaven on Earth."

Is India destined ever to experience such a blissful condition?

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE VEDANTA.*

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ON my journey through India I have noticed with satisfaction, that in philosophy till now our brothers in the East have maintained a very good tradition, better perhaps, than the more active but less contemplative branches of the great Indo-Aryan family in Europe, where Empiricism, Realism and their natural consequence, Materialism, grow from day to day more exuberantly, whilst metaphysics, the very centre and heart of serious philosophy, are supported only by a few ones, who have learned to brave the spirit of the age.

In India the influence of this perverted and perversive spirit of our age has not yet overthrown in religion and philosophy the good traditions of the great ancient time. It is true, that most of the ancient *darsanas* even in India find only an historical interest; followers of the Sankhya System occur rarely; Nyaya is cultivated mostly as an intellectual sport and exercise, like grammar or mathematics,—but the Vedantic is now, as in the ancient time, living in the mind and heart of every thoughtful Hindoo. It is true, that even here in the sanctuary of Vedantic metaphysics, the realistic tendencies, natural to man, have penetrated, producing the misinterpreting

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variations of Shankara's Adwaita, known under the names Visishtadwaita, Dwaita, Cuddhadwaita of Ramanuja, Madhva, Vallabha,—but India till now has not yet been seduced by their voices, and of hundred Vedantins (I have it from a well informed man, who is himself a zealous adversary of Sankara and follower of Ramanuja) fifteen perhaps adhere to Ramanuja, five to Madhava, five to Vallabha, and seventy-five to Shankaracharya.

This fact may be for poor India in so many misfortunes a great consolation; for the eternal interests are higher than the temporary ones; and the system of the Vedanta, as founded on the Upanishads and Vedanta Sutras and accomplished by Shankara's commentaries on them,—equal in rank to Plato and Kant—is one of the most valuable products of the genius of mankind in his researches of the eternal truth,—as I propose to show now by a short sketch of Shankara's Adwaita and comparison of its principal doctrines with the best that occidental philosophy has produced till now.

Taking the Upanishads, as Shankara does, for revealed truth with absolute authority, it was not an easy task to build out of their materials a consistent philosophical system, for the Upanishads are in Theology, Cosmology and Psychology full of the hardest contradictions. So in many passages the nature of Brahman is painted out in various and luxuriant colours, and again we read, that the nature of Brahman is quite unattainable to human words, to human understanding;—so we meet sometimes longer reports explaining how the world has been created by Brahman, and again we are told, that there is no world besides Brahman, and all variety of things is mere error and illusion;—so we have fanciful descriptions of the

Samsara, the way of the wandering soul up the heaven and back to the earth, and again read that there is no Samsara, no variety of souls at all, but only one Atman, who is fully and totally residing in every being.

Shankara in these difficulties created by the nature of his materials, in face of so many contradictory doctrines, which he has not allowed to decline and yet could not admit altogether,—has found a wonderful way out, which deserves the attention, perhaps the imitation of the Christian dogmatists in their embarrassments. He constructs out of the materials of the Upanishads two systems; one esoteric, philosophical (called by him *nirguna vidya*, sometimes *paramarthika avastha*) containing the metaphysical truth for the few ones, rare in all times and countries, who are able to understand it; and another exoteric, Theological (*saguna vidya*, *vyavharika avastha*) for the general public, who wants images, not abstract truth, worship, not meditation.

I shall now point out briefly the two systems, esoteric and exoteric, in pursuing and confronting them through the four chief parts, which Shankara's system contains, and which every complete philosophical system must contain:—

I. Theology, the doctrine of God or of the philosophical principle.

II. Cosmology, the doctrine of the world.

III. Psychology, the doctrine of the soul.

IV. Eschatology, the doctrine of the last things, the things after death.

I. Theology.

The Upanishads swarm with fanciful and contradictory descriptions of the nature of Brahman. He is the

all-pervading akasa, is the *purusha* in the sun, the *purusha* in the eye; his head is the heaven, his eyes are sun and moon, his breath is the wind, his footstool the earth; he is infinitely great as soul of the universe and infinitely small as the soul in us; he is in particular the *Isvara*, the personal God, distributing justly reward and punishment according to the deeds of man. All these numerous descriptions are collected by Shankara under the wide mantle of the exoteric theology, the *saguna vidya* of Brahman, consisting of numerous "vidyas" adapted for approaching the Eternal Being not by the way of knowledge but by the way of worshipping, and having each its particular fruits. Mark, that also the conception of God as a personal being, an *Isvara*, is merely exoteric and does not give us a conform knowledge of the Atman;—and indeed, when we consider what is personality, how narrow in its limitations, how closely connected to egoism the counterpart of Godly essence, who might think so low of God, to impute him personality?

In the sharpest contrast to these exoteric vidyas stands the esoteric, *nirguna vidya* of the Atman; and its fundamental tenet is the absolute inaccessibility of God to human thoughts and words:

यतो वाचो निवर्तन्ते
अप्राप्य मनसा सह.

and again:

अविज्ञातं विजानताम्
विज्ञातमविजानताम्.

and the celebrated formula occuring so often in Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad; *neti! neti* viz., whatever attempt you make to know the Atman, whatever description

you give of him, I always say: *na iti, na iti*, it is not so, it is not so! Therefore the wise Bhava, when asked by the king Vashkalin to explain the Brahman, kept silence. And when the king repeated his request again and again, the *rishi* broke out into the answer: "I tell it you, but you don't understand it; *canto yam atma*, this Atma is silence!" We know it now by the Kantian philosophy, that the answer of Bhava was correct, we know it, that the very organisation of our intellect (which is bound once for ever to its innate forms of intuition, space, time, and causality) excludes us from a knowledge of the spaceless, timeless, Godly reality for ever and ever. And yet the Atman, the only Godly being, is not unattainable to us, is even not far from us for we have it fully and totally in ourselves as our own metaphysical entity; and here when returning from the outside and apparent world to the deepest secrets of our own nature, we may come to God, not by knowledge, but by *anubhava*, by absorption into our own self. There is a great difference between knowledge, in which subject and object are distinct from each other, and *anubhava* where subject and object coincide in the same. He who by *anubhava* comes to the great intelligence, "*aham brahma asmi*," obtains a state called by Shankara *Samradhanam*, accomplished satisfaction; and indeed, what might he desire, who feels and vows himself as the sum and totality of all existence!

II.—Cosmology.

Here again we meet the distinction of exoteric and esoteric doctrine, though not so clearly severed by Shankara as in other parts of his system.

The exoteric Cosmology according to the natural but erroneous realism (*avidya*) in which we are born, considers

this world as the reality and can express its entire dependency of Brahman only by the mythical way of a creation of the world, by Brahman. So a temporal creation of the world, even as in the Christian documents, is also taught in various and well-known passages of the Upanishads. But such a creation of the material world by an immaterial cause, performed in a certain point of time after an eternity elapsed uselessly, is not only against the demands of human reason and natural science, but also against another important doctrine of the Vedanta, which teaches and must teach (as we shall see hereafter) the "beginninglessness of the migration of souls," *samsarasya anaditvam.* Here the expedient of Shankara is very clever and worthy of imitation. Instead of the temporary creation once for ever of the Upanishads, he teaches that the world in great periods is created and reabsorbed by Brahman (referring to the misunderstood verse of the Rigveda: सूर्यचन्द्रमसौ धाता यथा पूर्वमकल्पयत् this mutual creation and reabsorption lasts from eternity) and no creation can be allowed by our system to be a first one, and that for good reasons, as we shall see just now. If we ask: *Why* has God created the world? The answers to this question are generally very unsatisfactory. For his own glorification? How may we attribute to him so much vanity!—For his particular amusement? But he was an eternity without this play-toy!—By love of mankind? How may he love a thing before it exists; and how may it be called love, to create millions for misery and eternal pain!—The Vedanta has a better answer. The never ceasing new-creation of the world is a moral necessity connected with the central and most valuable doctrine of the exoteric Vedanta, the doctrine of Samsara.

Man, says Shankara, is like a plant. He grows, flourishes and at the end he dies but not totally. For as the plant, when dying, leaves behind it the seed, of which, according to its quality, a new plant grows;—so man, when dying, leaves his *Karma*, the good and bad works of his life, which must be rewarded and punished in another life after this. No life can be the first, for it is the fruit of previous actions, nor the last, for its actions must be expiated in a next following life. So the Samsara is without beginning and without end, and the new creation of the world after every absorption into Brahman is a moral necessity. I need not point out, in particular here in India, the high value of this doctrine of Samsara as a consolation in the distresses, as a moral agent in the temptations of life;—I have to say here only, that the Samsara, though not the absolute truth, is a mythical representative of truth which, in itself, is unattainable to our intellect; mythical is this theory of metempsychosis only in so far as it invests in the forms of space and time what really is spaceless and timeless and therefore beyond the reach of our understanding. So the Samsara is just so far from the truth, as the *saguna vidya* is from the *nirguna vidya*; it is the eternal truth itself, but (since we cannot conceive it otherwise) the truth in an allegorical form, adapted to our human understanding. And this is the character of the whole exoteric Vedanta, whilst the esoteric doctrine tries to find out the philosophical, the absolute truth.

And so we come to the esoteric Cosmology, whose simple doctrine is this, that in reality there is no manifold world, but only Brahman, and that what we consider as the world is a mere illusion (*maya*) similar to a *mrigatrishnika*, which disappears when we approach it, and not more

to be feared than the rope, which we took in the darkness for a serpent. There are, as you see, many similes in the Vedanta, to illustrate the illusive character of this world, but the best of them is perhaps when Shankara compares our life with a long dream :—a man whilst dreaming does not doubt of the reality of the dream, but this reality disappears in the moment of awakening, to give place to a truer reality, which we were not aware of whilst dreaming. The life a dream! This has been the thought of many wise men from Pindar and Sophocles to Shakespeare and Calderon de la Barca, but nobody has better explained this idea, than Shankara. And indeed, the moment when we die may be to nothing so similar as to the awakening from a long and heavy dream; it may be, that then heaven and earth are blown away like the nightly phantoms of the dream, and what then may stand before us? or rather in us? Brahman, the eternal reality, which was hidden to us till then by this dream of life!—This world is maya, is illusion, is not the very reality, that is the deepest thought of the esoteric Vedanta, attained not by calculating *tarka* but by *anubhava*, by returning from this variegated world to the deep recess of our own self (*Atman*). Do so, if you can, and you will get aware of a reality, very different from empirical reality, a timeless, spaceless, changeless reality, and you will feel and experience that whatever is outside of this only true reality is mere appearance, is maya, is a dream!—This was the way the Indian thinkers went, and by a similar way, shown by Parmenides. Plato came to the same truth, when knowing and teaching that this world is a world of shadows, and that the reality is not in these shadows, but behind them. The accord here of Platonism and Vedantism is wonderful, but both have

grasped the great metaphysical truth by intuition; their tenet is true, but they are not able to prove it, and in so far they are defective. And here a great light and assistance to the Indian and the Grecian thinker comes from the philosophy of Kant, who went quite another way, not the Vedantic and Platonic way of intuition, but the way of abstract reasoning and scientific proof. The great work of Kant is an analysis of human mind, not in the superficial way of Locke, but getting to the very bottom of it. And in doing so Kant found, to the surprise of the world and of himself, that three essential elements of this outside world, *viz.*, space, time and casuality, are not, as we naturally believe, eternal fundaments of an objective reality, but merely subjective, innate, intuitive forms of our own intellect. This has been proved by Kant and by his great disciple Schopenhauer with mathematical evidence, and I have given these proofs (the fundament of every scientific metaphysics) in the shortest and clearest form in my "Elemete der, Metaphysik"—a book which I am resolved now to get translated into English, for the benefit not of the Europeans (who may learn German) but of my brothers in India, who will be greatly astonished to find in Germany the scientific substruction of their own philosophy, of the Adwaita Vedanta! For Kant has demonstrated, that space, time and causality are not objective realities, but only subjective forms of our intellect, and the unavoidable conclusion is this, that the world, as far as it is extended in space, running on in time, ruled throughout by causality, in so far is merely a representation of my mind and nothing beyond it. You see the concordance of Indian, Grecian and German metaphysics; the world is maya, is illusion, says Shankara;—it is a

world of shadows, not of realities, says *Plato*;—it is "appearance only, not the thing in itself," says *Kant*. Here we have the same doctrine in three different parts of the world, but the scientific proofs of it are not in Shankara, not in Plato, but only in Kant.

III. Psychology.

Here we convert the order and begin with the esoteric Psychology, because it is closely connected with the esoteric Cosmology and its fundamental doctrine: the word is *maya*. All is illusive, with one exception, with the exception of my own Self, of my Atman. My Atman cannot be illusive, as Shankara shows, anticipating the "*cogito, ergo sum*" of Descartes,—for he who would deny it, even in denying it, witnesses its reality. But what is the relation between my individual soul, the Jiva-Atman and the highest soul, the Parama-Atman or Brahman? Here Shankara, like prophet, forsees the deviations of Ramanuja, Madhva and Vallabha and refutes them in showing, that the Jiva cannot be a part of Brahman (Ramanuja), because Brahman is without parts (for it is timeless and spaceless, and all parts are either successions in time or co-ordinations in space,—as we may supply),—neither a different thing from Brahman (Madhava), for Brahman is *ekam eva advitiyam*, as we may experience by *anubhava*,—nor a metamorphose of Brahman (Vallabha), for Brahman is unchangeable (or, as we know now by Kant, it is out of casuality). The conclusion is, that the Jiva, being neither a part nor a different thing, nor a variation of Brahman, must be the Paramatman fully and totally himself, a conclusion made equally by the Vedanta in Shankara, by the Platonic Plotinos, and by the Kantian Schopenhauer. But Shankara in his conclusions goes

perhaps further than any of them. If really our soul, says he, is not a part of Brahman but Brahman himself, then all the attributes of Brahman, all-pervadingness, eternity, all-mightiness (scientifically spoken; exemption of space, time, causality) are ours; *aham brahma asmi*, I am Brahman, and consequently I am all-pervading (spaceless) eternal (timeless,) almighty (not limited in my doing by causality). But these godly qualities are hidden in me, says Shankara, as the fire is hidden in the wood and will appear only after the final deliverance.

What is the cause of this concealment of my godly nature? The Upadhis, answers Shankara, and with this answer we pass from the esoteric to the exoteric psychology. The Upadhis are manas and indriyas, prana with its five branches, sukshman sariram,—in short, the whole psychological apparatus, which, together with a factor changeable from birth to birth, with my karman, accompanies my Atman in all his ways of migration without infecting his Godly nature, as the crystal is not infected by the colour painted over it. But wherefrom originate these Upadhis? They form of course part of the *maya*, the great world illusion, and like *maya*, they are based in our innate *avidya* or ignorance, a merely negative power and yet strong enough to keep us from our Godly existence. But now, from where comes the *avidya*, this primeval cause of ignorance, sin, and misery? Here all philosophers in India and Greece and everywhere have been defective, until Kant came to show us that the whole question is inadmissible. You ask for the cause of *avidya*, but she has no cause; for causality goes only so far as this world of the Samsara goes, connecting each link of it with another, but never beyond Samsara and its fundamental charac-

teristic the *avidya*. In enquiring after a cause of *avidya* with *maya*, Samsara and Upadhis, you abuse, as Kant may teach us, your innate mental organ of causality to penetrate into a region for which it is not made and where it is no more available. The fact is, that we are here in ignorance, sin and misery, and that we know the way out of them, but the question of a cause for them is senseless.

IV.—Eschatology.

And now a few words about this way out of the Samsara, and first about the exoteric theory of it. In the ancient time of the hymns there was no idea of samsara but only rewards in heaven and (somewhat later) punishment in a dark region (*padam gabhiram*), the precursor of the later hells. Then the deep theory of Samsara came up, teaching reward and punishment in the form of a new birth on earth. The Vedanta combines both theories and so he has a double expiation, first in heaven and hell, and then again in a new existence on the earth. This double expiation is different (1) for performers of good works, going the *Pitriyana*, (2) for worshippers of the Sagunam Brahma, going the *Devayana*, (3) for wicked deeds, leading to what is obscurely hinted at in the Upanishads as the *Tritiyam Sthanam*, the third place—(1) the *Pitriyana* leads through a succession of dark spheres to the moon, there to enjoy the fruits of the good works and, after their consumption, back to an earthly existence. (2) the *Devayana* leads through a set of brighter spheres to Brahman, without returning to the earth (तेषां न पुनरावृत्तिः). But this Brahman is only Sagunam Brahma, the object of worshipping, and its true worshippers, though entering into this Sagunam Brahma without returning, have to wait in it until they get *moksha* by obtaining *samayogadarshanam*,

the full knowledge of the Nirgunam Brahma. (3) The *Tritiyam Sthanam* including the later theories of hells, teaches punishment in them, and again punishment by returning to earth in the form of lower castes, animals, and plants. All these various and fantastical ways of Samsara are considered as true, quite as true as this world is, but not more. For the whole world and the whole way of Samsara is valid and true for those only who are in the *avidya*, not for those who have overcome her, as we have to show now.

The esoteric Vedanta does not admit the reality of the world nor of the Samsara, for the only reality is Brahman, seized in ourselves as our own Atman. The Knowledge of this Atman, the great intelligence: "*aham brahma asmi*," does not produce *moksha* (deliverance), but is *moksha* itself. Then we obtain what the Upanishads say:

भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थिः
छिद्यन्ते सर्वसंशयाः ।
क्षीयन्ते हृदयग्रन्थिः
तस्मिन्दृष्टे परावेर ।

When seeing Brahma as the highest and the lowest everywhere, all knots of our heart, all sorrows are split, all doubts vanish, and our works become nothing. Certainly no man can live without doing works, and so also the *Jivanmukta*; but he knows it, that all these works are illusive, as the whole world is, and therefore they do not adhere to him nor produce for him a new life after death. —And what kind of works may such a man do?—People have often reproached the Vedanta with being defective in morals, and, indeed, the Indian genius is too contemplative

to speak much of works; but the fact is nevertheless, that the highest and purest morality is the immediate consequence of the Vedanta. The Gospels fix quite correctly as the highest law of morality: "love your neighbour as yourselves." But why should I do so, since by the order of nature I feel pain and pleasure only in myself, not in my neighbour? The answer is not in the Bible (this venerable book being not yet quite free of Semetic realism), but it is in the Veda, is in the great formula "*tat twam asi,*" which gives in three words metaphysics and morals altogether. You shall love your neighbour as yourselves,—because you are your neighbour, and mere illusion makes you believe, that your neighbour is something different from yourselves. Or in the words of the Bhagavadgita; he who knows himself in everything and everything in himself, will not injure himself, by himself, *Nahinasti atmana atmanam.* This is the sum and tenor of all morality, and this is the standpoint of a man knowing himself as a Brahman. He feels himself as everything,—so he will not desire anything, for he has whatever can be had;—he feels himself as everything—so he will not injure anything, for nobody injures himself. He lives in the world, is surrounded by its illusions but not deceived by them; like the man suffering from *timira*, who sees two moons but knows that there is one only, so the Jivanmukta sees the manifold world and cannot get rid of seeing it, but he knows, that there is only one being, Brahman, the Atman, his own Self, and he verifies it by his deeds of pure uninterested morality. And so he expects his end, like the potter expects the end of the twirling of his wheel, after the vessel is ready. And then, for him, when death comes, no more Samsara:

न तस्य प्रणा उत्क्रामन्ति। ब्रह्म एव सन ब्रह्म अप्येति!
He enters into Brahman, like the streams into the ocean: he leaves behind him *nama* and *rupam*, he leaves behind

यथा नद्यः स्यन्दमानाः समुद्रे
अस्तं गच्छन्ति नामरूपे विहाय
तथा विद्वान नामरूपाद्विमुक्तः
परात्परं पुरुषमुपैति दिव्यम्

individuality, but he does not leave behind him his *Atmana*, his self. It is not the falling of the drop into the infinite ocean, it is the whole ocean, becoming free from the fetters of ice, returning from his frozen state to what he is really and has never ceased to be, to his own all prevading, eternal, all mighty nature. And so the Vedanta, in its unfalsified form, is the strongest support of pure morality, is the greatest consolation in the sufferings of life and death,—Indians, keep to it!—

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THE VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY.*

BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

THE Vedanta philosophy, as it is generally called at the present day, really comprises all the various sects that now exist in India. Thus there have been various interpretations, and to my mind they have been progressive, beginning with the dualistic or Dvaita and ending with the non-dualistic or Advaita. The word *Vedanta* literally means the end of the Vedas,—the Vedas being the scriptures of the Hindus.† Sometimes in the West, by the Vedas are meant only the hymns and rituals of the Vedas. But at the present time these parts have almost gone out of use, and usually by the word *Vedas* in India, the Vedanta is meant. All our commentators, when they want to quote a passage from the scriptures, as a rule quote from the Vedanta, which has another technical name with the commentators—the Shrutis.‡ Now all the books

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* The above address was delivered before the Graduate Philosophical Society of Harvard University, on March 1896.

† The Vedas are divided mainly in two portions: the Karmakanda and the Jnanakanda,—the work-portion and the knowledge-portion. To the Karmakanda belong the famous hymns and the rituals or Brahmanas. Those books which treat of spiritual matters apart from ceremonials, are called Upanishads. The Upanishads belong to the Jnanakanda or knowledge-portion. It is not that all the Upanishads came to be composed as a separate portion of the Vedas. Some are interspersed among the rituals, and at least one is in the Samhita or hymn-portion. Sometimes the term *Upanishads* is applied to books which are not included in the Vedas,—*e.g.*, the Gita; but as a rule it is applied to the philosophical treatises scattered through the Vedas. Those treatises have been collected, and are called the Vedanta.

‡ The term *Shruti*,—meaning "that which is heard,"—though including the whole of the Vedic literature, is chiefly applied by the commentators to the Upanishads.

known by the name of the Vedanta were not entirely written after the ritualistic portions of the Vedas. For instance, one of them—the Isha Upanishad—forms the fortieth chapter of the Yajur Veda, that being the oldest part of the Vedas. There are other Upanishads* which form portions of the Brahmanas or ritualistic writing; and the rest of the Upanishads are independent, not comprised in any of the Brahmanas or other parts of the Vedas; but there is no reason to suppose that they were entirely independent of other parts, for, as we well know, many of these have been lost entirely, and many of the Brahmanas have become extinct. So it is quite possible that the independent Upanishads belonged to some Brahmanas, which, in course of time, fell into disuse, while the Upanishads remained. These Upanishads are also called Forest Books or Aranyakas.

The Vedanta, then, practically forms the scriptures of the Hindus, and all systems of philosophy that are orthodox have to take it as their foundation. Even the Buddhists and Jains, when it suits their purpose, will quote a passage from the Vedanta as authority. All schools of philosophy in India, although they claim to have been based upon the Vedas, took different names for their systems. The last one, the system of Vyasa, took its stand upon the doctrines of the Vedas

* The Upanishads are said to be one hundred and eight in number. Their dates cannot be fixed with certainty,—only it is certain that they are older than the Buddhistic movement. Though some of the minor Upanishads contain allusions indicating a later date, yet that does not prove the later date of the treatise, as, in very many cases in Sanskrit literature, the substance of a book though of very ancient date, receives a coating, as it were, of later events in the hands of the sectarians, to exalt their particular sect.

more than the previous systems did, and made an attempt to harmonize the preceding philosophies, such as the Sankhya and the Nyaya, with the doctrines of the Vedanta. So it is especially called the Vedanta Philosophy; and the Sutras or Aphorisms of Vyasa are, in modern India, the basis of the Vedanta Philosophy. Again, those Sutras of Vyasa have been variously explained by different commentators. In general there are three sorts of commentators * in India now; and from their interpretations have arisen three systems of philosophy and sects. One is the dualistic or Dvaita; a second is the qualified non-dualistic or Vishishtadvaita; and a third is the non-dualistic or Advaita. Of these the dualistic and the qualified non-dualistic include the largest number of

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* The commentaries are of various sorts,—such as the Bhashya, Tika, Tippani, Churni, etc,—of which all except the Bhashya are explanations of the text or difficult words in the text, The Bhashya is not properly a commentary, but the elucidation of a system of philosophy out of texts, the object being not to explain the words, but to bring out a philosophy. So the writer of a Bhashya expands his own system, taking texts as authorities for his sytem.

There have been various commentaries on the Vedanta. Its doctrines found their final expression in the philosophical Aphorisms of Vyasa. This treatise called the Uttara Mimamsa, is the standard authority of Vedantism,—nay, is the most authoritative exposition of the Hindu scriptures. The most antagonistic sects have been compelled, as it were, to take up the texts of Vyasa, and harmonize them with their own philosophy. Even in very ancient times, the commentators on the Vedanta philosophy formed themselves into the three celebrated Hindu sects of dualists, qualified non-dualists, and non-dualists. The ancient commentaries are perhaps lost; but they have been revived in modern times by the post-Buddhistic commentators, Shankara, Ramanuja, and Madhva. Shankara revived the non-dualistic form, Ramanuja, the qualified non-dualistic form of the ancient commentator Bodhayana, and Madhva, the dualistic form. In India the sects differ mainly in their philosophy; the difference in rituals is slight, the basis of their philosophy and religion being the same.

the Indian people. The non-dualistic are comparatively few in number. Now I will try to lay before you the ideas that are contained in all these three sects; but before going on, I will make one remark,—that these different Vedanta systems have one common psychology, and that is, the psychology of the Sankhya system. The Sankhya psychology is very much like the psychologies of the Nyaya and Vaisheshika systems, differing only in minor particulars.

All the Vedantists agree on three points. They believe in God, in the Vedas as revealed, and in cycles. We have already considered the Vedas. The belief about cycles is as follows:—All matter throughout the universe is the outcome of one primal matter called Akasha; and all force whether gravitation, attraction or repulsion, or life, is the outcome of one primal force called prana. Prana acting on Akasha is creating or projecting* the universe. At the beginning of a cycle, Akasha is motionless, unmanifested. The Prana begins to act, more and more, creating grosser and grosser forms out of Akasha,—plants, animals, men, stars, and so on. After an incalculable time this evolution ceases and involution begins, everything being resolved back through finer and finer forms into the original Akasha and Prana, when a new cycle follows. Now there is something beyond Akasha and Prana. Both can be resolved into a third thing called Mahat,—the Cosmic Mind. This Cosmic Mind does not create Akasha and Prana, but changes itself into them.

* The word which is "creation" in your language is, in Sanskrit, exactly "projection," because there is no sect in India which believes in creation as it is regarded in the West—a something coming out of nothing. What we mean by creation is projection of that which already existed.

We will now take up the beliefs about mind, soul, and God. According to the universally accepted Sankhya psychology, in perception, in the case of vision, for instance,—there are, first of all, the instruments or Karanas of vision,—the eyes. Behind the instruments—the eyes—is the organ of vision or Indriya,—the optic nerve and its centres,—which is not the external instrument, but without which the eyes will not see. More still is needed for perception. The mind or Manas must come and attach itself to the oogan. And besides this, the sensation must be carried to the intellect or Buddhi,—the determinative, reactive state of the mind. When the reaction comes from Buddhi, along with it flashes the external world and egoism. Here then is the will; but everything is not complete. Just as every picture, being composed of successive impulses of light, must be united on something, stationary to form a whole, so all the ideas in the mind must be gathered and projected on something that is stationary—relatively to the body and mind,—that is, on what is called the Soul or Purusha or Atman.

According to the Sankhya philosophy, the reactive state of the mind called Buddhi or intellect, is the outcome, the change, or a certain manifestation of the Mahat or Cosmic Mind. The Mahat becomes changed into vibrating thought; and that becomes in one part changed into the organs, and in the other part into the fine particles of matter. Out of the combination of all these, the whole of this universe, is produced. Behind even Mahat, the Sankhya conceives of a certain state which is called Avyaktam or unmanifested, where even the manifestation of mind is not present, but only the causes exist. It is also called Prakriti. Beyond this Prakriti, and eternally separate

from it, is the Purusha, the Soul of the Sankhya, which is without attributes and omnipresent. The Purusha is not the doer but the witness. The illustration of the crystal is used to explain the Purusha. The latter is said to be like a crystal without any color, before which different colors are placed, and then it seems to be colored by the colors before it, but in reality it is not. The Vedantists reject the Sankhya ideas of the soul and nature. They claim that between them there is a huge gulf to be bridged over. On the one hand the Sankhya system comes to nature, and then at once it has to jump over to the other side and come to the soul, which is entirely separate from nature. How can these different colors, as the Sankhya calls them, be able to act on that soul which, by its nature, is colorless? So the Vedantists, from the very first, affirm that this soul and this nature are one.* Even the dualistic Vedantists admit that the Atman or God is not only the efficient cause of this universe, but also the material cause. But they only say so in so many words. They do not really mean it, for they try to escape from their conclusions, in this way. They say there are three existences in this universe,—God, soul, and nature. Nature and soul are, as it were, the body of God, and in this sense it may be said that God and the whole universe are one. But this nature and all these various souls remain

* The Vedanta and the Sankhya philosophy are very little opposed to each other. The Vedanta God developed out of the Sankhya's Purusha. All the systems take up the psychology of the Sankhya. Both the Vedanta and the Sankhya believe in the infinite soul, only the Sankhya believes there are many souls. According to the Sankhya, this universe does not require any explanation from outside. The Vedanta believes there is the one Soul, which appears as many; and we build on the Sankhya's analysis.

the beginning of a cycle do they become manifest; and when the cycle ends, they become fine, and remain in a fine state.

The Advaita Vedantists—the non-dualists—reject this theory of the soul, and having nearly the whole range of the Upanishads in their favor, build their philosophy entirely upon them. All the books contained in the Upanishads have one subject, one task before them,—to prove different from each other through all eternity. Only at the following theme; "Just as by the knowledge of one lump of clay we have the knowledge of all the clay in this universe, so what is that, knowing which we know everything in the universe?" The idea of the Advaitists is to generalize the whole universe into one,—that something which is really the whole of this universe. And they claim that this whole universe is one, that is one Being manifesting Itself in all these various forms. They admit that what Sankhya calls nature, exists, but say that nature is God. It is this Being, the *Sat*, which has become converted into all this,—the universe, man, soul, and everything that exists. Mind and Mahat are but the manifestations of that one *Sat*. But then the difficulty arises that this would be pantheism. How came that Sat which is unchangeable, as they admit (for that which is absolute is unchangeable), to be changed into that which is changeable and perishable? The Advaitists here have a theory which they call Vivarta Vada or apparent manifestation. According to the dualists and the Sankhyas, the whole of this universe is the evolution of primal nature, according to some of the Dualists the whole of this universe is evolved from God. And according to the Advaitists proper, the followers of Shankara-

charya, the whole universe is the *apparent* evolution of God. God is the material cause of this universe, but not really, only apparently. The celebrated illustration used, is that of the rope and the snake, where the rope appeared to be the snake, but was not really so. The rope did not really change into the snake. Even so this whole universe as it exists, is that Being. It is unchanged, and all the changes we see in it are only apparent. The changes are caused by Desha, Kala, and Nimitta (space, time, and causation), or, according to a higher psychological generalisation, by Nama and Rupa (name and form). It is by name and form that one thing is differentiated from another. The name and form alone cause the difference. In reality they are one and the same. Again, it is not, the Vedantists say, that there is something as phenomenon and something as noumenon. The rope is changed into the snake apparently only; and when the delusion ceases, the snake vanishes. When one is in ignorance, he sees the phenomenon and does not see God. When he sees God, this universe vanishes entirely for him. Ignorance or Maya, as it is called, is the cause of all this phenomenon,—the Absolute, the Unchangeable, being taken as this manifested universe. This Maya is not absolute zero, not non-existence. It is defined as neither existence nor non-existence. It is not existence, because that can be said only of the Absolute, the Unchangeable, and in this sense, Maya is non-existence. Again it cannot be said it is non-existence; for if it were, it could never produce the phenomenon. So it is something which is neither; and in the Vedanta philosophy it is called Anirvachaniya or inexpressible. Maya then is the real cause of this universe. Maya gives the name and form to what Brahman or God

gives the material; and the latter seems to have been transformed into all this. The Advaitists, then, have no place for the individual soul. They say individual souls are created by Maya. In reality they cannot exist. If there were only one existence throughout, how could it be that I am one, and you are one, and so forth? We are all one, and the cause of evil is the perception of duality. As soon as I begin to feel that I am separate from this universe, then first comes fear, and then comes misery. "Where one hears another, one sees another, that is small. Where one does not see another, where one does not hear another, that is the greatest, that is God. In that greatest is perfect happiness. In small things there is no happiness.

According to the Advaita philosophy, then this differentiation of matter, these phenomena, are, as it were for a time, hiding the real nature of man; but the latter really has not been changed at all. In the lowest worm, as well as in the highest human being, the same divine nature is present. The worm form is the lower form in which the divinity has been more overshadowed by Maya; that is the highest form in which it has been least overshadowed. Behind everything the same divinity is existing, and out of this comes the basis of morality. Do not injure another. Love every one as your own self, because the whole universe is one. In injuring another, I am injuring myself; in loving another, I am loving myself. From this also springs that principle of Advaita morality which has been summed up in one word,—self-abnegation. The Advaitist says this little personalized self is the cause of all my misery. This individualized self, which makes me different from all other beings, brings hatred and jealousy and misery,

struggles and all other evils. And when this idea has been got rid of, all struggle will cease, all misery vanish. So this is to be given up. We must always hold ourselves ready, even to give up our lives for the lowest beings. When a man has become ready even to give up his life for a little insect, he has reached the perfection which the Advaitist wants to attain; and at the moment when he has become thus ready, the evil of ignorance falls away from him, and he will feel his own nature. Even in this life, he will feel that he is one with the universe. For a time, as it were, the whole of this phenomenal world will disappear for him, and he will realize what he is. But so long as the Karma of his body remains, he will have to live. This state, when the veil has vanished and yet the body remains for some time, is what the Vedantists call the Jivan Mukti, the living freedom. If a man is deluded by a mirage for some time, and one day the mirage disappears,—if it comes back again the next day or at some future time, he will not be deluded. Before the mirage first broke, the man could not distinguish between the reality and the deception. But when it has once broken, as long as he has organs and eyes to work with, he will see the image, but will no more be deluded. That fine distinction between the actual world and the mirage, he has caught, and the latter cannot delude him any more. So when the Vedantist has realised his own nature, the whole world has vanished for him. It will come back again, but no more the same world of misery. The prison of misery has become changed into Sat, Chit, Ananda,—Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute,—and the attainment of this is the goal of the Advaita Philosophy.

THE VEDANTIC DOCTRINE OF THE FUTURE LIFE.*

BY PANDIT SITANATH TATTVABHUSHAN.

1. Refutation of Materialism.

IN Hindu Philosophy one misses the elaborate and long-drawn arguments for the immortality of the soul which form a prominent feature of the philosophical Theology of Europe. The explanation of this is no doubt to be found in the general unanimity of Hindu philosophers as regards the doctrine in question. All the six orthodox schools of Hindu Philosophy agree in thinking of the soul as not only immortal, but also as eternal. The heterodox school of Buddhist Philosophy, too, accepts the doctrine in a modified form. It is only out-and-out Materialists like the Charvakas that questioned it. There was therefore little occasion for our philosophers spending time and energy in proving that the soul does not perish with the body. But that the Materialist's arguments were not left quite unheeded, appears from controversial passages here and there in Hindu philosophical works,—passages which are apparently directed against the heretics just mentioned. For instance, in his commentary on the fifty-third and fifty-fourth aphorisms of the third *pada*, third chapter, of the *Brahmasutras*, Sankara first states and then argues against the views of the Lokayatikas or Charvakas. The aphorisms commented upon occur in a place where no one would expect them, which shows

* Reprint from "the Indian Review."

perhaps that they were the result of an after-thought on the part of the author and the little interest he felt in the superficial speculations of the Materialists. I shall, however, give the substance of both the arguments of these philosophers as stated by Sankara and his refutation of those arguments. The reasonings of the Materialists amount to this:

"Though consciousness is hidden in external objects, it becomes manifest in these objects when they form an organism, just as the intoxicating power hidden in certain objects is manifested when they are made into wine. There is, therefore, no soul apart from the body, which is capable of either going to heaven or attaining liberation. The properties of an object are those that exist and cease to exist in its absence. Heat and light are, in this sense, properties of fire. Now, the vital functions, sensibility, memory and the like, which are believed to be properties of the soul, are found in the body, and not found without the body. They are, therefore, not the properties of an extra-organic object, but really properties of the body."

Sankara's reply, which is an amplification of the aphorisms referred to, is, in substance, this:

"If the properties of the soul are to be set down as properties of the body because they exist, while the body exists, why should not they be concluded as *not* properties of the body for their not existing while the body exists. Form and such other qualities, which are really properties of the body, exist so long as the body exists; but the vital functions and the rest do not exist in the body after death. Besides, form and other properties like it are perceived even by others, but the properties of the soul, sensibility, memory, etc., are not perceived by anyone else than the soul to which they belong. Then, again, one knows the existence of these properties in the body while it lives; how can one be sure that, at the destruction of one body, they are not transmitted to another? Even the possibility of this refutes Materialism. Then, as to the true character of consciousness, the Materialist will perhaps admit that consciousness is the knowledge of matter and material objects. If so, he must also admit that inasmuch as matter and material objects are objects of consciousness, it cannot be their property. For matter to perceive matter is as impossible as it is for fire to burn itself, and for a dancer to climb upon his own shoulders. Form and other properties of matter cannot, we see, make themselves or other properties their objects. Inasmuch, therefore, as consciousness makes

both internal and external things its objects, it is not a material property. If its distinction from material objects be admitted, its independence of them must also be admitted. Moreover, its identity in the midst of changing circumstances proves its externality. Remembrance and such states of the mind become possible only because the knowing self is recognised as the same in two successive states. Thus, in the consciousness 'I saw this before' the seeing and the recognising self is known as the same. The argument that because preception takes place while the body exists, therefore it is a property of the body, has already been refuted. It is as valid an argument as that, because perception takes place while such materials as lamps, etc., are present, therefore it is a property of lamps etc. The body is only an instrument of perception like lamps, etc. Nor is the body absolutely necessary even as an instrument of perception inasmuch as a variety of perception takes place in the state of dreaming, when the body is inactive. Thus the existence of the soul as something different from the body, is an irresistible fact."

II. The Law of *Karma*.

The other pivot on which the Vedantic doctrine of immortality turns, is the doctrine of *Karma*,—the doctrine that every action must be followed by its proper effect. This doctrine is sometimes stated in such an abstract shape as to appear like a law of mechanical causality; but really, in its application to rational beings, it has an ethical aspect also. As an ethical law, it lays down, when stated in its broadest form, that every moral action must have a moral effect. In its popular form it prescribes happiness as the result of every virtuous act and suffering, of every vicious act. But thus started, it looks very much like the Christian doctrine of justice,—the doctrine that every virtuous act deserves happines as its reward and every vicious act necessitates snffering as its punishment. Reward and punishment are personal acts,—the awards of a personal judge, and the Christian doctrine of justice is necessarily connected with that of such a judge. Hindu thinkers, on the other hand, distinctly deny the personal character of the law of *Karma*. In the thirty-fourth aphorism of the first

pada, second chapter of the *Brahmasutras*, as well as in the commentary thereon, the results of the moral actions of rational beings are described as irrespective of Divine activity and as dependent on the free activity of individual agents. The *Bhagavad Gita* also says, in the fourteenth verse of its fifth chapter: "The Lord creates neither people's actions nor their agency nor the fruits of their actions; in this matter nature takes its course." Nevertheless, the impersonality of the moral law is not always consistently kept in view by Vedantists, and the same *Gita* which speaks rather mysteriously. in some places, of nature as a cause other than God, describes the Supreme Being, in other places, as the Dispenser of Heaven and Hell as reward of virtue and punishment of vice. Even though we may set down such descriptions as only occasional lapses into popular modes of thought, it must be admitted, on the other hand, that the Vedantic conception of the moral order of the world is not, and could not be purely impersonal. The Universe being the manifestation of a conscious Being, a Being embodying in himself the highest perfections, and the lives of individual rational beings being so many reproductions of the Divine life, ever tending to perfection, the moral order, with all the vicissitudes of rise and fall, suffering and enjoyment, must be held as teleological at the bottom, has having a grand purpose which it is fulfilling, though gradually, at every step. Though not personal, therefore, in the popular sense, the moral order, or in other words, the law of *Karma*, may be called personal in a higher sense,—in the sense of its fulfilling a Divine purpose. As such, it is a strong proof of the soul's immortality,—its continued moral activity in another sphere of life when one is closed to it. Every moral action, as the law lays down, must have a moral effect. If the

effect is pleasant, the pleasantness is only incidental; it must lead to a certain elevation or degradation of the soul, as the case may be, but ultimately to the former,—to moral progress. If the effect is painful, the pain is only an instrument, like pleasure, for bringing about a certain moral effect. Moral actions, again, have a certain moral effect. Moral actions, again, have a certain collective effect. They all tend to build a moral character,—a character with fixed tendencies to thoughts, feelings and actions of a definite nature. Every rational being—and a rational being must be moral by virtue of his possessing reason—has such a character at the time of death, and the law of *Karma* demands that this character must be perpetuated,—must continue to have the effects which exist potentially in the moral forces embodied in it. To suppose a cessation of life and activity at the destruction of the body is, first of all, to suppose a violation of the law of universal causation understood in its broadest sense. The law of causation requires not only that every cause should have an effect, but that the effect should be adequate to the cause. Now, human character is an aggregate of moral cause, moral forces; its effects also should therefore be moral, and there can be no moral effects in the true sense without a conscious personal centre of activity,—without the perpetuation, that is, of the lives of moral agents. Secondly, to suppose an extinction of the soul at the death of the body, is to pronounce rational and moral life as purposeless,—to deny the moral order of the universe and to conceive it as the play of blind forces. If, therefore, there is a moral order in the universe, if rational life has a purpose, that purpose cannot be anything higher than moral progress,—the attainment of perfection by rational beings; and such a purpose requires the perpetuation of

the conscious life of individuals. The gradual elevation of the mere race, to which the moral efforts of individuals contribute,—an idea which seems to satisfy some thinkers,—does not fully meet the requirements of the case. There is no meaning in the elevation of a race unless the individuals composing it are conceived as elevated, and to say that one set of individuals exists in order to contribute to the elevation of another set or generation, is to deny the most essential characteristic of a rational being,—that of its being not an instrument or means to any other being or thing, but an end unto itself. Individuals do indeed contribute to the elevation of other individuals; but to say that an individual lives only for other individuals, is to make everything hopelessly relative, to deny the existence of an absolute end and to eviscerate moral worth of its very essence,—its personal character. We thus see that the law of *Karma*, understood as just explained, guarantees the perpetuation of the moral life of every rational being and its gradual progress and final attainment of perfect union with the All-good, the ultimate end of existence.

II. THE LAW OF EVOLUTION PROVES PRE-EXISTENCE.

The next question that concerns us is the form of immortality conceived by the Vedanta. Does the soul remain disembodied in its future life or undergo a process of re-birth? With this question is connected that of the soul's pre-existence, its existence before a particular incarnation. The Vedanta is decidedly of opinion that every individual soul passes through a practically infinite number of incarnations,—incarnations determined by its own moral activity and determining it in turn. The formation of a soul, *i. e.*, of a complex intellectual and moral organism, in the course of a few months or years, it apparently con-

ceives as an impossibility. It will appear so also to the modern intellect if we take a number of most important facts into serious consideration. It is undeniable that we are born with definite intellectual and moral characters. Circumstances indeed affect and contribute to the formation of character; they, however, do not act upon empty minds and souls equal and identical in their blankness, but upon clearly defined moral powers and tendencies of infinite variety both in quality and quantity. If, in mature life, all formations, whether intellectual or moral, demand a history, an explanation in the form of a series of previous actions, and all differences a difference of history, does not the complexity and variety of endowments with which our present life begins, demand a similar explanation,—a similar history protected into the unknown past? A striking confirmation of the Vedantic doctrine of the soul's pre-existence is supplied by the theory of evolution now so widely accepted. This theory seems distinctly to militate against the current supposition that the human soul is the work of about nine months' time. The human body has an almost incalculably longer history behind it. Its present form, with its nice adaptations and its wonderful capacity for multiplying itself, is the result of a series of evolutions extending through millions of years, during which it has passed through innumerable lower and tentative forms. It is a law of Nature that the time required for the evolution of an organism is long in proportion to its richness, niceness and complexity. The human mind, then—the richest, nicest and most complex of organisms,—far from requiring only nine months for its formation, would seem to demand a much longer period than any physical or physiological structure whatever. The theory of the transmission of

acquired powers from father to son, cannot, it seems, go farther than explaining the superior richness and adaptability of the organisms with which succeeding generations are favoured, compared with those possessed by their ancestors. The net result of experience, the acquired niceness of the organism, its fitness for longer action and thought may be, as it is said to be, transmitted to its reproductions. But unless the favoured organisms are occupied by superior minds, unless the laws that govern physiological evolution are acknowledged as obtaining in the spiritual world also, the current theory of transmitted experience does not seem sufficient to explain the variety and complexity of the human soul at its birth. The direct transmission of powers from one soul to another, and the origin of the soul of the child from that of the father,—suppositions that underlie current thinking on the subject,—are theories without any rational grounds whatever, and are hardly even conceivable. On the other hand, the analogy of physiological evolution points to a parallel process of spiritual evolution,—the gradual development of souls by experience gathered in each life, and their re-birth in fresh lives, the extent of their development determining the quality of the organisms occupied by them. In these re-incarnations, the souls may be conceived as carrying with them the result of their previous experiences, with the details dropped from memory, but the substantial progress in intellectual and moral power uninterrupted and ready to determine, and be increased by fresh experience.

IV. What Sleep and Re waking proves.

Now, if these considerations help to solve the problem of pre-existence, they also help to solve the allied problem of re-incarnation. But I shall discuss the latter problem a little further. I have, in some of my writings, referred

to the phenomena of sleep and re-waking and forgetting and recollecting as having very important bearings on the philosophy of mind, and as facts from which our old Vedantists drew the legitimate conclusions. I shall now show how these phenomena help in solving the problem of re-incarnation. It seems to me that, in relation to this problem, they have a double bearing, (1) they prove the continuance of the contents of the individual consciousness, with all their variety and limitations intact, even without the instrumentality of the body, and (2) they show the necessity of the body for the re-manifestation of these contents after their suspense in death. In profound dreamless sleep, our individuality, or rather the manifestation of individual life, suffers a partial suspense. The wave that constitutes it seems to return to the ocean. But this temporary suspense of individuality is not a merging, not a total sublation, of difference. The contents of every individual life are maintained intact,—in all their fulness and distinction. There is no loss and no mingling. When the time comes, each individual starts up from the bosom of the Eternal, the ever-waking, with its wealth of conscious life undiminished, with its identity undimmed. Every one gets back what was his own and nothing but his own. These seems to be separate chambers in the Eternal Bosom for each individual to rest soundly and unmolested. Now, this fact seems to prove that the contents of our conscious individual life can exist in the Eternal Consciousness, with their totality and difference intact, even in the absence of the body, and its organs. However instrumental our brain-cells and other organs may be in the re-production of the contents of consciousness in the state of re-waking, they cannot explain their persistence in the hours of sleep; far less can they

be identified with those contents. It is not the body—not the brain, nor the nerves—that can be said to sustain thought. The contents of consciousness can be retained only in a conscious being. To say that they can exist in an unconscious form,—in a so-called 'sub-conscious region—is to be actually guilty of a contradiction. Thoughts can persist, can retain their essence and identity, only in a thinking being remaining conscious and self-identical in the midst of change. The reproduction of such contents in us as 'I am the same being now that I was before,' 'this object is the same that I saw yesterday,' 'this idea is the same that occurred to me before I slept,' and so on implies that, during the temporary lapse of individual life, these ideas are retained as ideas and not as anything else in the very Being who is the basis of our lives, a Being who is thus seen to have an eternal, unchanging, ever-conscious aspect of his nature besides his intermittent manifestation as 'our' consciousness. As Sankara says in his commentary on the *Brahmasutras*, II. 2. 31, "Unless there exists one relating principle in the past, present and future, one which is unchangeable and sees all things, the facts of remembrance, recognition, etc., which depend upon mental impressions requiring space, time and occasional cause, cannot be explained."

V. Individuality Requires Organism.

But if the phenomena of sleep and awaking prove the continuance of the individual consciousness in the Universal, and its independence of physical conditions for this continuance, they also prove the dependence of that life on such conditions for its actual manifestation. Sleep indicates the temporary exhaustion of nervous power. When, by continual activity, the nervous system has lost its strength, and requires refreshment from rest, it ceases to

work, and the cessation of its activity is accompanied by a temporary suspense of consciousness in its individual manifestation. It is only when the strength of the organs has been restored by sufficient rest, that the flow of thoughts and feelings that constitutes individual life recommences, and the identity and continuity of individual consciousness is re-established. In the waking state also, the health and vigour of mental life are found determined by the soundness and strength of the organism, and injuries to the organs specially connected with the manifestation of consciousness are seen to materially affect the order and vividness of this manifestation. A valid induction from these patent facts is that the re-appearance of individual consciousness after the dissolution of the present body will require a fresh organism with essentially the same properties. We cannot indeed be absolutely sure that there are no other conditions of the re-manifestation of consciousness than those with which we are acquainted. But in the absence of any proof of the existence of such conditions, we cannot say that there are probably such conditions; nay we can hardly assert even their possibility. It seems barelv possible that, as is asserted, at a certain stage of development, individuals acquire the power of disembodying themselves,—extricating themselves from their gross bodies and continuing their conscious lives in a subtle body imperceptible to the senses. That some such environment is required for the individual soul, seems to be axiomatic from its nature as a finite being. The *Sukshma Sharira* spoken of in our theological books, the body that consists of the five vital airs, the five organs of knowledge in their subtle forms as powers, the five organs of action conceived in the same fashion, and egoity or reflected self-consciousness,—the

body which is described as the vehicle of the soul's migration to the *Pitriloka* and the *Brahmaloka*,—the regions of the manes and the Divine regions,—seems to be too fine for the purpose, which it is conceived as fulfilling. For locomotion and activity in space a material body having extension and parts is necessary, and such a body must be supposed to belong to even the most and richly endowed of souls in the other world. But the evolution of such a fine ethereal body must be conceived to follow the same slowly acting laws that obtain in the region of gross matter, and also to be dependent upon a corresponding growth of spiritual power. Admitting, therefore, the evolution of such a body in extraordinary cases it may be safely laid down that so far as ordinary individual self is concerned, there is not the slightest probability of its reproduction and actual continuance except in connection with an organism similar to that which we possess in our present life.

VI. Ethical Life implies Society, and Society Embodied Beings.

From another point of view, re-incarnation seems to be the most probable form of immortality. The conditions of ethical progress would apparently be absent in a disembodied existence. The ethical life must be social. There is neither morality nor spirituality for an isolated being. Virtue is indeed personal, individual. There is no meaning in the purity of a society in which the individuals are not pure. But the purity of individuals and their continued growth in righteousness imply their inclusion in a society of which the members owe duties to one another, and in which a free exchange of thoughts and sentiments and an active co-operation in good work are possible. These things are inconceivable in a state of existence in which souls are

disembodied; for it is through our bodies that we are able to communicate with one another. The very conditions of that spiritual life, then, which makes immortality necessary and desirable, require that souls should be re-born either in this very world or in others more or less similar to this.

VII. Objection from Forgetfulness Answered.

An ever-recurring objection to the doctrine of pre-existence and re-incarnation is that we have no memory of a previous existence and cannot possibly remember the events of this life if we should be re-born, and that the enjoyment or suffering of the fruits of actions which have passed out of memory, involves an apparent injustice. The phenomena of sleep and re-waking and those of forgetting and recollecting, to which I have already referred, supply an answer to this objection. They prove an important truth which is often overlooked, and the overlooking of which lies at the basis of the objection just mentioned. That truth is that by passing out of our memory a fact does not cease to have connection with our mental life, and even to determine it materially. In an independent, self-sustained mind like the divine, the presence or absence of an idea can mean nothing less than its presence or absence in consciousness. If anything could possibly pass out of its cognisance, it would cease to have any existence for it. But this is not true of our finite minds, which are contained in and perpetually sustained by the Infinite. Facts are constantly going out of our individual consciousness and returning to it from the Divine mind, which form its eternal basis, and in which they are perpetually held. At the present moment, for instance, when I am intent upon writing this paper, how few of the manifold facts of my life are actually present with me! But they are neverthe-

less determining my present action from the back-ground of my consciousness, in which they lie hidden. How many events have preceded and made it possible! Most of them cannot, by any efforts I may make, be recalled, and will not perhaps revisit my mind any more. Some can be recalled, but are absent now. Others are starting into consciousness from the dark chambers of the mind in which they lay concealed only a few moments back. My present action is, it is clear, due to a certain permanent form which the mind has taken as the combined effects of these various classes of facts, and to the recurrence of a certain number of them. In the same manner, the moral character which I now possess, and which determines the ethical quality of my present actions is the combined result of a long series of thoughts, feelings and actions many of which have passed entirely out of my consciousness, and many more which may be recalled only with great difficulty. But all these facts are, in a sense, present with me in their effect, *i.e.*, my character, and if I now suffer in consequence of sins committed before, but now forgotten or enjoy the fruits of righteous conduct equally forgotten, I do not feel myself wronged in the one case or specially favoured in the other. In sound, dreamless sleep, again, the facts of life, as we have already seen, beat a complete retreat from the field of consciousness and leave it utterly empty so far as its individual manifestation is concerned. But they are, by no means, lost in consequence of this temporary disappearance, and do not cease to determine waking life. Now, considered in the light of these facts, the objections to pre-existence, and re-incarnation referred to are seen to be groundless. That we have at present no recollection of any previous state of existence, does not, in the first place, prove that it will never come back to our

memory. For aught we know, its re-appearance may be waiting for conditions to be hereafter fulfilled. In the second place, even if it should so happen that such facts will never recur to us under any circumstances, it would not follow that they never occurred and are not determining our present life. As we have already seen, the richness and complexity of our minds even at the moment of birth, and their speedy development in definite lines under the varying circumstances of this life, point to a long mental history through which we have passed in the unremembered past. In the third place, if, in our present life, we have to lose and gain constantly in consequence of actions which we have utterly forgotten, but which have, nevertheless left lasting effects on our character, there can be no injustice in our enjoying or suffering the fruits of actions done in previous states of existence, and which, though forgotten now, have yet made us what we are. And finally, it may also be that the few years during which we live in forgetfulness of our past lives are, in proportion to the actual span of our existence, a much shorter period than are our hours of dreamless sleep in proportion to the total extent of our present life. The alleged recollection of previous states of existence by many persons characterised by uncommon purity of heart, is a subject which I simply mention and pass by ; its discussion would be beyond the limited scope of this paper.

VIII.—From Animal to Man.

I shall refer to one more aspect of Vedantic doctrine of the future life before I close. The law of evolution in the physical and physiological world points, as we have seen to a similar law in the spiritual world. Does not the same law, we may now ask, testify to the reasonableness of the Vedantic view that the animating principles of all

creatures are substantially of the same nature and the transmigration of these principles from one species to another is quite possible ? If man's body is linked to, and is the development of, the bodies of the lower animals where is the unreasonableness of thinking that his soul also has passed through a similar process of gradual development, having animated lower organism in the more remote periods of its pre-existence, gaining in intelligence and moral strength as it migrated into higher and higher organism and at last attaining humanity both physically and spiritually ? Current European thought draws a hard and fast line between man and the lower animals and practically sets down the latter as soulless beings. Apart from the progress of philosophical speculation, the recent discoveries of natural historians as regards the highly developed social feelings of some of the lower animals, and the existence in them of sentiments akin to the ethical, have been showing more and more clearly, day by day, the hastiness of such a view, and it now seems impossible to imagine a gap between human consciousness in its lowest forms and the consciousness of the higher brutes. It seems quite probable therefore that psychological science will, in not a very distant future, confirm the anticipations of the Vedanta Philosophy and link together all conscious existence by a law similar to the law of physiological evolution. We shall then see with the eyes of science, as we already see with the eye of intellectual intuition, that the humanity of which we are so proud is an acquisition which has come to us as the result of a long struggle carried on through millions of years, leading us, under the slow but beneficial law of *karma*, through organic and spiritual conditions of an infinitely diverse nature, to that which seems to be the nearest to God. But the reverse process—from

humanity to animality—which the old Vedantists seem to have thought as likely as the other, seems to be quite improbable in the light of both natural and moral science. Progress—from seed to tree, from child to man, from the jellyfish to the highest mammalia, from barbarism to the highest civilisation—is the order of Nature, and so while the teachings of the Vedanta, interpreted scientifically, inspires the hope that we shall one day be gods and partake of the Divine blessedness, they leave no room for the fear that we may one day descend to that brute condition from which we have risen.

THE VEDANTA—ITS THEORY AND PRACTICE.

BY SWAMI SARADANANDA.

OUR subject this evening is the philosophy of the *Vedanta* and its application to the life of man. This high system of philosophy was evolved in India, thousands of years ago, but it is difficult to determine the precise date it was first evolved. We find its existence long before Buddhism and long before the age of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, the two great pre-Buddhistic epics of India. By examining all the different religions and sects that exist in India, we find the principles of the *Vedanta* underlie each one of them. Nay more, the *Rishis* or seers of thoughts, the fathers of the *Vedanta*, claim that its principles underlie all the different religions that exist on the face of the earth and all that will come in future even. The goal which the *Vedanta* points at is the goal to which all religions, all society, all humanity are rushing either consciously or unconsciously, through the process of evolution.

One great peculiarity of this philosophy is that it is not built around one person or prophet. It is founded on the "latter portion or the knowledge portion of the Vedas," as the term *Vedanta* shows. The term *Vedas*, from the Sanskrit root *Vid* to know, means, according to the oldest Hindu commentator, all the super-sensuous knowledge that has been revealed to man up to the present and that which will be in future. And to the books which

*A lecture delivered in America.

kept the record of this knowledge, the term *Vedas* became applied later. Then the Vedic commentator goes on saying that this super-sensuous knowledge might be revealed not only to Hindus but to other people and their experience should be regarded as *Vedas* also. The *Vedas* were divided into two great divisions, 'the work portion' which teaches man how, by the performance of duty, the observance of morality and other acts he might go to heaven, a better place of enjoyment, and " the knowledge portion " which teaches him that not even the enjoyments of heaven should be his aim inasmuch as they too are fleeting and transitory but to go beyond all relativity and find in himself the Divine, the Centre of all Knowledge and power. Of course it took ages for the Hindu mind to evolve this system of philosophy.

Speaking of philosophy, we must always keep in mind that it never went against religion in India. They always went hand-in-hand. And religion, in order to appeal to man as a whole, should not only appeal to his heart but to his intellect also and therefore must have a sound basis of metaphysics. For is not man a compound being, a combination of reason and emotion and will? Can any religion satisfy him which does not fulfil all his highest aspirations on these fields?

The rapid march of Science and the wonderful discoveries it is making every day by the study of the external and the material world, is striking terror at the hearts of many. They seem to think that the foundation of religion is being undermined day by day and the whole social fabric built on this foundation is in imminent danger. But the seers of old who, by their study of the internal world, found the basis of religion, of morality, of duty, and in short of everything in that Unity which forms the

background of this universe, that ocean of Knowledge and Bliss Absolute from which the Universe has come out, if they were here to-day would have rejoiced to find that, instead of undermining, Science is making the basis of religion stronger than ever inasmuch as it is rapidly approaching towards the same goal, the same Unity. And it must be so; for is not the Universe one connected whole? Is not the division of it into external and internal an arbitrary one? Can we ever know the external *per se*? Then again we speak of the natural laws which govern the external; but are laws anything else than the method or manner in which our mind connects into a link a series of phenomena? This Universe according to the *Vedanta* is one connected mass. Start from the external and you come to the internal and *vice versa*. It has come out of the Infinite ocean of Knowledge and Bliss and will go back to it again. It is evolving and involving from all eternity. View it as one unit and it can have no change, no motion. It is perfect and all change is within it. For change and motion is only possible when there is comparison, and comparison can only be made between two or more things. Again this chain of evolution and involution, of manifestation and returning to the unmanifested or seed form of nature can have no beginning in time. To admit a beginning of it would be to admit the beginning of the Creator and not only that, but that he must be a cruel aud partial Creator, who has produced all these diversities at the outset. Then again there would arise another difficulty, the Creator, the first cause, must either have been perfected or imperfected by the creation. So, according to the *Vedanta*, the creation is as much eternal as the Creator himself, only it sometimes remains in a manifested state and sometimes in an unmanifested. What

then is the purpose, the motive of this creation, this eternal flow of evolution and involution? The answer which the *Vedanta* gives is that it is a play of the Infinite. You cannot ascribe any motive to the perfect, the Absolute, without making Him imperfect. The infinite, the perfect must have no motive to compel It to create. The Infinite must be absolutely free and independent, and the very conception of the finite, the relative, implies the existence of the Absolute. The Absolute is the only real existence and the Universe is but a speck in that infinite ocean of Knowledge and Bliss. He is playing with Himself and projecting this world of phenomena. He is appearing through all these masks of imperfection and at the same time He is remaining One and perfect in all splendour and glory. "He vibrates, and He does not vibrate, He is far and He is near; He is within all and He is without all this world of phenomena." "As the web-wombed spider projects and takes back the thread, as hair grows in the head of a man (without any effort) so this universe comes out of that Infinite ocean of Knowledge and Bliss and goes back to It again.

Science by tracing the evolution to its cause has arrived at the laws of the survival of the fittest and sexual selection, for the change of one species into another. The *Vedanta* is one with it as regards the truth of the evolution but differs from it inasmuch as it says that the cause of the change of one species into another is the struggle of the Divine within every form, to manifest Itself better and better. As one of our great philosophers has said, in the case of the irrigation of a field, where the tank is placed in a higher level, the water is always trying to rush into the field but is barred by a gate. Upon the gate the water will rush in by its own nature. This struggle of the

Divine has produced or evolved higher and higher forms up to the man form. It is going on still and it will be completed only when the Divine will manifest Itself perfectly, without any bars or bolts to hinder Its expression. This highest point of evolution transcends even the conscious existence and so we shall call it the super-conscious existence. This stage of development has been reached by individuals long ago. Christ and Buddha and all the great teachers which the world has produced, attained to that state. The whole of humanity is approaching towards that unconsciously. But is such a stage possible where the evolution will attain its completion? The *Vedanta* says it is. Every evolution presupposes an involution. To admit an unending chain of will, will be to conceive motion in a straight line, which modern science has proved to be impossible. But what would take society ages and ages to attain, individuals can attain even in this life and have attained it as proved by the religious history of the world. For what are all the bibles but the records of experience of men who attained to that stage? Examine them and read between the lines and you will find that the same stage which the *Vedanta* expresses in the famous aphorism as "Thou art that infinite ocean of Knowledge and Bliss," (*Tat tvam asi*), is that which was expressed by Buddha as attaining to *Nirvana* (perfected state) and by Christ as becoming as perfect as the Father in Heaven and by the Muhammadan Sufis as becoming one with the Truth. The *Vedanta* claims that this idea of the oneness of *man* with the Divine, that the real nature of Him is infinite and perfect, is to be found in every religion in India or outside of it; only in some the idea is expressed through mythology and symbology. It claims that what one man or a few men attained long before is the natural inheri-

tance of all men and every one will attain to it sooner or later. Man therefore, according to the *Vedanta*, is Divine and everything that is strong, good and powerful in human nature is the expression of Divinity within him.

In this super-conscious existence lies the basis of all ethics. Attempts have been made in the present time to find a permanent basis of morality within the relative to no effect. Every one of us feels within himself that morality and unselfishness and doing good to others are good and without these neither the individual nor the nation can develop. Even men standing outside the pale of any religion are advancing them on utilitarian grounds, that we must do that which brings the greatest amount of good to the greatest number. But if we question why we should do that, why should I look upon my brother as myself and not try to secure the greatest amount of good to myself alone, even at the sacrifice of all else, no plausible answer is given. The answer which the *Vedanta* gives to this question is that you and I are not separate from this Universe. It is by mistake we think ourselves to be distinct and unconnected entities, independent of one another. All history, all science show that it is just the opposite, that this Universe is one connected whole, look at it from the external ocean of matter, in which our bodies but represent so many different points. Behind the external there is that one vast ocean of mind, in which our minds but represent so many different whirlpools and behind that is the Soul, the Self, the Absolute and Perfect. Everything in human life points towards this oneness. Our love, our sympathy, kindness, and doing good to others all are but expressions conscious or unconscious of this oneness of man with the universe. Consciously or unconsciously every man feels it ; consciously or

unconsciously he tries to express it, that he is one with the universal Being and as such every soul his soul, and every body his body, that by injuring others he injures himself and by loving others he loves himself.

This gives rise to a subtle but unfounded question. Shall we lose our individuality when we attain the super-conscious stage, the highest point of evolution? The *Vedanta* questions in its turn, are we individuals as yet in the proper sense of the term? Does individuality mean the changing element in man or does it apply to the unchangeable essence in him? Do you apply the term individuality to the body and mind of man which is changing every minute? If so there is no occasion for the former question inasmuch as we are losing or changing our individuality every minute of our existence. Think what great change have we, each one of us, undergone since we were born, think what a change for the wicked when he becomes a good member of society, or the primitive man when he becomes civilized, or think what great change of a barbarous individuality when through the process of evolution the ape form changes into the man form? Do we lament the change of individuality, in these cases? The *Vedanta* says, by developing your individuality, you rise to a point where you become a perfect individual. You change your apparent individuality for a better and real one. The process of evolution is from lawlessness, through law, beyond law; from the unconscious, through the conscious, beyond the conscious. Our conscious existence, where every action is accompanied with a feeling of egoity does not cover the whole of our existence. During sleep or in performing actions which are known as the automatic actions, there is no feeling of egoity present and yet we do exist, though we enter a stage which is below

the conscious and inferior to it. In the highest stage of development also there is no feeling of egoity but it is infinitely superior to the conscious. Apparently in a superficial view the highest and the lowest stages of development seem to be one and the same but there is as much difference between the two as between darkness produced by the want of light and darkness produced by the excess of light and known in science as the polarisation of light. There is an illiterate and ignorant man, he enters, and comes out a sage, a prophet, a great seer of thought. He discovers in himself the eternal fountain-head of all knowledge and power; he finds the kingdom of heaven within. "For him," say the Vedas, "all doubts (and hankerings) vanish for ever and all selfish knots of the heart are cut asunder, the endless chain of cause and effect fades and dies for him who attains the Highest."

This attaining the super-conscious existence has been described in many religions as seeing and realising and feeling God. The rapid march of reasons has proved beyond a doubt, that all our ideas of God are perfectly anthropomorphic, that we are creating our own mental representation. What is the necessity then for worshipping God? Why shall I worship my own mental creation? The history of evolution shows how the idea of God grows and develops with the growth of the man. Low from fetichism and animism he comes to polytheism and thence to monotheism. Suggested by his own dreams or the love of his dead ancestors, or the stupendous forces in nature, the idea of a future existence dawns in his infant mind and he tries to peep behind the screen of the senses. How, in his search after the super sensuous, he comes up gradually through the stages of ancestor-worship and nature-

worship, to the recognition of many spirits or gods behind all the different mighty forces of nature and lastly how he comes to the conception of one supreme ruler at the head of these different gods and pays his homage to Him. Reason will say that, although this worship of the super-sensuous was a great motive power in bringing out his powers and developing his mind, yet all this time he has been worshipping his own mental creations and now that his eyes have been opened he ought to discard all these mistaken ideas of God. The *Vedanta* does not deny that all these different ideas of God are anthropomorphic but it asks in its turn, are not all our ideas of the external the same? Can we ever know the world but as our mind represents it to us and has not science proved already that the senses are deceptive and can never know things as they are? Therefore, if it is reasonable to reject all our ideas of God because they are anthropomorphic, it is reasonable also to throw away every other idea from the mind, but how many of us are willing to do so and have the power of doing so? Then again though all that we know of anything are what our minds represent them to be, yet they help us in developing ourselves, and bringing us higher and higher. Then lastly what the *Vedanta* has to say in this point is that man is not wrong or mistaken in his worshipping all these different ideas of God, only he has been travelling from lower to higher truths. His progress in this world is not from error to truth but from lower and lower truths to higher and higher ones. Everything in this world, even truth itself is relative. What is truth for one state of things or one plane of existence is not truth for another state or another plane and the different ideas of God are nothing less than the different views of the Absolute, the Infinite from different planes of the

relative. Supposing, for instance, we make a journey to the Sun, our view of the Sun changes every minute we proceed. With every step in advance we see newer and newer vision of the same Sun. The Sun which appeared to be a bright little disc grows larger and larger till at last when we reach the Sun itself, we see the Sun in its entirety. We know the Sun as it is. The Sun has not changed all the time but our views of it have changed till at last we got the full view of the luminary. This is the progress of man towards the Infinite. His view of the Infinite has never become perfectly nil, but through the limitations of his senses, his intellect and all, he sees only a little bit of the Infinite and worships it as God. The fault is not with the Infinite but with his own limited faculties. As he grows, these limitations become less and less and he sees the Infinite better and better till at last all his limitations fade away as mists before the rising Sun and he grasps the Infinite in Its entirety: he discovers in himself the Infinite ocean of Knowledge and Bliss. This has been beautifully expressed in the Vedas. "Two birds of bright golden plumage, inseparable companions of each other are sitting on the same tree, the one on the higher and the other on the lower branches of it." The upper bird not caring to taste the sweet and bitter fruits of the tree, sits majestic in his own glory and sees the lower one tasting the fruits. As the lower bird gets the taste of the bitter fruit of the tree he grows disgusted and looks up to the splendid vision above him of the upper bird and draws himself nearear to him. He forgets again the glorious vision in his love for the fruits of the tree and goes on tasting them as before till he tastes another bitter fruit. He grows disgusted again and advances a little more towards the bright vision before him. So on he advances

till at last when he reaches the upper bird, the whole vision changes and he finds himself to be the upper bird who was sitting in all splendour, and majesty all the time.

The goal being thus the same in all religions, the *Vedanta* has no quarrel with any. It looks upon all the different religions as so many different ways for attaining that one indivisible ocean of Knowledge and Bliss. "As the different rivers, having their sources in different mountains, roll down through crooked or straight paths and at last come into the ocean—so all these various creeds and religions taking their start from different standpoints and running through crooked or straight courses, at last come unto Thee, Oh, Lord." The *Vedanta* condemns nobody, for it looks upon man not as he is at the present moment but what he really is. It reaches that sooner or later every man will discover his real nature and will know himself as the source of all knowledge, power and bliss. Will or nil every man is advancing towards that through every act that he is doing here. The worker by doing good to others, the philosopher by developing his reason, the lover of God by developing and directing his emotions all, all will attain the super-conscious plane, the highest stage of development. What if a man be an atheist or agnostic? The question is, is he sincere and is he ready to sacrifice himself for the good of others and for the truth that he has known? The *Vedanta* says there is no fear for him. He will come to higher and higher truths and ultimately attain the highest. Allow infinite variation in religious thoughts. Follow your own but do not try to bring everybody to the same opinion. It can never be, for is not unity in diversity the law of nature? And is not the goal the same though the roads are different?

Do not make yourself the standard for the universe but know that Unity forms the background of this universe and whatever way man might travel, at last he will arrive at that.

THE VEDANTA FOR THE WORLD.*

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Religion—Our Life Principle.

"A VERY small amount of religious work performed brings a very large amount of result"—are the eternal words of the author of the *Gita*, and if that statement wanted an illustration, in my humble life I am finding everyday the truth of that great saying. My work, gentlemen of Kumbakonam, has been very insignificant indeed, but the kindness and the cordiality of welcome that have met me at every step of my journey from Colombo to this city are simply beyond all expectation. Yet, at the same time, it is worthy of our traditions as Hindus, it is worthy of our race; for here we are the Hindu race, whose vitality, whose life-principle, whose very soul, as it were, is in religion. I have seen a little of the world, travelling among the races of the West and the East; and everywhere I find among nations one great ideal, which forms the backbone, so to speak, of that race. With some it is politics, with others it is social culture; others again have intellectual culture and so on for their national background. But this, our mother-land, has religion and religion alone for its basis, for its backbone, for the bedrock upon which the whole building of its life has been based. Some of you may remember that, in my reply to the kind address which the people of Madras sent over to me in America, I pointed out the fact that a peasant in India has, in many respects, a better religious

*Speech by Swami Vivekananda at Kumbakonam, Madras on his return in 1897 from the Chicago Parliament of Religions.

education than many a gentleman in the West, and to-day beyond all doubt, I myself am verifying my own words. There was a time when I would feel rather discontented at the want of information among the masses of India and the lack of thirst among them for information, but now I understand it. Where their interest lies they are more eager for information than the masses of any other race that I have seen or have travelled among. Ask our peasants about the momentous political changes in Europe, the upheavals that are going on in European society. They do not know anything of these, nor do they care to know; but those very peasants,—even in Ceylon, detatched from India in many ways, cut off from a living interest in India—I found the very peasants working in the fields there had already known that there was a Parliament of Religions in America, and that one of their men had gone over there, and that he had some success. Where, therefore, their interest is and there they are as eager for information as any other race; religion is the one and the sole interest of the people in India. I am not just now discussing whether it is good to have the vitality of the race in religious ideals or in political ideas, but so far it is clear to us, that for good or for evil our vitality is concentrated in our religion. You cannot change it. You cannot destroy one thing and put in its place another. You cannot transplant a large growing tree from one soil to another and make it immediately take root there. For good or for evil the religious ideal has been flowing into India for thousands of years, for good or evil the Indian atmosphere has been filled with ideals of religion for shining scores of centuries, for good or evil we have been born and brought up in the very midst of these ideals of religion, till it has entered into our very blood, and tingles with every drop of

it in our veins, and has become one with our constitution, become the very vitality of our lives. Can you give such a religion up without the rousing of the same energy in reaction, without filling the channel which that mighty river has cut out for itself in the course of thousands of years? Do you want that the Ganges should go back to its icy bed and begin a new course? Even if that were possible, it would be impossible for this country to give up her characteristic course of religious life and take up a new career of politics or something else for herself. You can only work under the law of least resistance, and this religious line is the line of least resistance in India. This is the line of life, this is the line of growth, and this is the line of well-being in India—to follow the track of religion.

THIS WORLD—THE GOAL OF OTHERS.

Aye, in other countries religion is only one of the many necessities in life. To use a common illustration which I am in the habit of using, my lady has many things in her parlour, and it is the fashion now-a-days to have a Japanese vase, and she must procure it; it does not look well without it. So my lady, or my gentleman, has many other occupations in life; a little bit of religion also must come in to complete it. Consequently she has little religion. Politics, social improvement, in one word, this world, is the goal of the rest of mankind, and God and religion come in quietly as the helpers out of the world; their God is, so to speak, the being who helps to cleanse and to furnish this world of ours;—that is, apparently, all the value of God for them. Do you not know how, for the last hundred or two hundred years, you have been hearing again and again out of the lips of men who ought to have known better, from the mouths of those who pretend, at least, to know better, that all the arguments they produce

against this Indian religion of ours is this,—that our religion does not conduce to well-being in this world, that it does not bring to us handfuls of gold, that it does not make robbers of nations, that it does not make the strong stand upon the bodies of the weak, and feed themselves with the life's blood of the weak. Certainly our religion does not do that. It cannot march cohorts, under whose feet the earth trembles, for the purpose of destruction and pillage and the ruination of races. Therefore they say—what is there in this religion? It does not bring any grist to the grinding mill, any strength to the muscles. What is there in such a religion?

Ours the only True Religion, because it goes beyond the World and Teaches Renunciation.

They little dream that that is the very argument with which we prove our religion to be good and true. Ours is the true religion because it does not make for this world. Ours is the only true religion because this little sense-world of three days' duration is not to be, according to it, the end and aim of all, is not to be our great goal. This little earthly horizon of a few feet is not that which bounds the view of our religion. Ours is away beyond, and still beyond; beyond the senses, beyond space, and beyond time, away, away beyond, till nothing of this world is left there and the universe itself becomes like one drop in the transcendent ocean of the glory of the soul. Ours is the true religion because it teaches that God alone is true, and that this world is false and fleeting, and that all your gold is dust, and that all your power is finite, and that life itself is oftentimes an evil; therefore it is that ours is the true religion. Ours is the true religion, because, above all, it teaches renunciation, and stands up with the wisdom of ages to tell and to declare to the nations who

are mere children of yesterday in comparison with the hoary antiquity of the wisdom that our ancestors have discovered for us here in India—to tell them in plain words, "Children, you are slaves of the senses; there is only finiteness in the senses; there is only ruination in the senses; the three short days of luxury here bring only ruin at last. Give it all up, renounce the love of the senses and of the world; that is the way of religion." Through renunciation is the way to the goal and not through enjoyment. Therefore, ours is the only true religion. Aye, it is a curious fact that, while nations after nations have come upon the stage of the world, played their parts vigorously for a few moments and died almost without leaving a mark or a ripple on the ocean of time, here we are, living, as it were, an eternal life. They talk a great deal of the new theories about the survival of the fittest, and they think that it is the strength of the muscles which is the fittest to survive. If that were true, any one of the aggressively known old world nations would have lived in glory to day, and we, the weak Hindus—an English young lady once told me, what have the Hindus done; they never even conquered one single race!—even this race, which never conquered even one other race or nation, lives here three hundred million strong. And it is not all true all its energies are spent, that atavism has seized upon every bit of its body;—that is not true. There is vitality enough, and it comes out in torrents and deluges when the time is ripe and requires it. We have, as it were, thrown a challenge to the whole world from the most ancient times. In the West they are trying to solve the problem how much a man can possess, and we are trying here to solve the problem on how little a man can live. This struggle and this difference has to go on still for some

centuries. But if history has any truth in it, and if prognostications ever prove true, it must be that those who train themselves to live on the least supply of things and to control themselves well, will, in the end, gain the battle, and that all those who run after enjoyment and luxury, however vigorous they may seem for the moment, will have to die and become annihilated.

THE VEDANTA ALONE CAN CURE THE EVILS OF THE WEST.

There are times in the history of a man's life, nay in the history of the lives of nations, when a sort of world-weariness becomes painfully predominant. It seems that such a tide of world-weariness has come upon the Western World. There too they have their thinkers, great men; and they are already finding out that it is all vanity of vanities, this race after gold and power; many, nay most, cultured men and women there are already weary of this competition, this struggle, this brutality of their commercial civilisation, and they are looking forward towards something better. There is a class which still clings on to political and social changes as the only panacea for the evils in Europe, but among the great thinkers there other ideals are growing. They have found out that no amount of political or social manipulation of human conditions can cure the evils of life. It is a change of the soul itself for the better that alone will cure the evils of life. No amount of force, or government, or legislative cruelty will change the conditions of a race, but it is spiritual culture and ethical culture alone that can change wrong racial tendencies for the better. Thus, these races of the West are eager for some new thought, for some new philosophy; the religion they have had, Christianity, although imperfectly understood and good and glorious in many respects, is, as understood hitherto, found to be insufficient. The

thoughtful men of the West find in our ancient philosophy, especially in the *Vedanta*, the new impulse of thought they are seeking, the very spiritual food and drink they are hungering and thirsting for. And it is no wonder.

THE VEDANTA ALONE IS THE UNIVERSAL RELIGION FOR MANKIND.

I have become used to hear all sorts of wonderful claims put forward in favour of every religion under the sun. You have also heard, quite within recent times, claims put forward in favour of Christianity by a great friend of mine, Dr. Barrows, that Christianity is the only universal religion. Let me consider this question a while and lay before you my reasons why I think that it is the *Vedanta*, and the *Vedanta* alone that can become the universal religion of man, and that none else is fitted for that role.

FOR IT IS NOT BUILT ROUND THE LIFE OF ANY PERSONAL FOUNDER.

Excepting our own, almost all the other great religions in the world are inevitably connected with the life or lives of one or more founders. All their theories, their teachings, their doctrines and their ethics are built round the life of a personal founder from whom they get their sanction, their authority, and their power; and strangely enough upon the historicality of the founder's life is built, as it were, all the fabric of such religions. If there is one blow dealt to the historicality of that life as has been the case in modern times with the lives of almost all the so-called founders of religion—we know that half of the details of such lives is not now seriously believed in and that the other half is seriously doubted—if this becomes the case, if that rock of historicality, as they pretend to call it, is shaken and shivered, the whole building tumbles down,

broken absolutely, never to regain its lost status. Every-one of the great religions in the world excepting our own, is built upon such historical characters; but ours rest upon principles. There is no man or woman who can claim to have created the *Vedas*. They are the embodiment of eternal principles; sages discovered them; and now and then the names of these sages are mentioned, just their names; we do not even know who or what they were. In many cases we do not know who their fathers were, and almost in every case we do not know when and where they were born. But what cared they, these sages, for their names? They were the preachers of principles, and they themselves, as far as they went, tried to become illustrations of the principles they preached. At the same time, just as our God an impersonal and yet a personal God so in our religion, a most intensely impersonal one, a religion based upon principles, and yet it has an infinite scope for the play of persons; for what religion gives you more incarnations, more prophets and seers and still waits for infinitely more? Says the *Bhagavad Gita* that Incarnations are infinite, leaving ample scope for as many as you like to come. Therefore if any one or more of these persons in India's religious history, any one or more of these Incarnations, and any one or more of our prophets, are proved not to have been historical, it does not injure our religion a bit; even then it remains there firm as ever, because it is based upon principles, and not on persons. It is vain to try to gather all the peoples of the world around a single personality. It is difficult to make them gather together even around eternal and universal principles. If it ever becomes possible to bring the largest portion of humanity to one way of thinking in regard to religion, mark you, it must be always through principles

and not through persons. Yet, as I have said, our religion has ample scope for the authority and influence of persons. There is that most wonderful theory of *Ishta*, which gives you the fullest and the freest choice possible among these great religious personalities. You may take up any one of the prophets or teachers as your guide and the object of your special adoration; you are even allowed to think that he whom you have chosen is the greatest of the prophets, the greatest of all the *Avataras*; there is no harm in that, but you must keep on a firm background of eternally true principles. The strange fact is here, that the power of Incarnations has been holding good with us only so far as they are illustrations of the principles in the *Vedas*. The glory of Sri Krishna is that he has been the best preacher of our eternal religion of principles and the best commentator on the *Vedanta* that ever lived in India.

IT IS IN HARMONY WITH SCIENCE.

The second claim of the *Vedanta* upon the attention of the world is that, of all the scriptures in the world, it is the one scripture the teaching of which is in entire harmony with the result that have been attained by the modern scientific investigations of external nature. Two minds in the dim past of history, cognate to each other in form and kinship, and sympathy, started being placed in different circumstances, for the same goal through different routes. The one was the ancient Hindu mind the other the ancient Greek mind. The latter started in search of that goal beyond by analysing the external world. The former started by analysing the internal world. And even through the various vicissitudes of their history it is easy to make out these two vibrations of thought tending to produce similar echoes from the goal beyond. It seems clear that the conclusions of modern materialistic science

can be acceptable, harmoniously with their religion, only to the *Vedantins*, or Hindus as they call them. It seems clear that modern materialism can hold its own and at the same time approach spirituality by taking up the conclusions of the *Vedanta*. It seems to us, and to all who care to know, that the conclusions of modern science are the very conclusions the *Vedanta* reached ages ago; only in modern science they are written in the language of matter. This, then, is another claim of the *Vedanta* upon modern Western minds, its rationality, the wonderful rationalism of the *Vedanta*. I have myself been told by some of the best scientific minds of the day in the West how wonderfully rational the conclusions of the Vedanta are. I know one of them personally who scarcely has time to eat his meals, or go out of his laboratory, and who yet would stand by the hour to attend my lectures on the *Vedanta*; for, as he expresses it, they are so scientific, they so exactly harmonise with the aspirations of the age and with the conclusions which modern science is coming to at the present time. Two such scientific conclusions drawn from *Comparative Religion*, I would specially like to draw your attention to; the one bears upon the idea of the oneness of things.

UNIVERSALITIES OF RELIGIONS AND TOLERATION RECOGNISED BY THE VEDANTA ALONE

We observe in the histories of Babylon and among the Jews an interesting religious phenomenon happening. We find that each of those Babylonian and Jewish peoples were divided into so many tribes, each tribe having a god of its own, and that these little tribal Gods had often a generic name. The gods among the Babylonians were all called Baals, and among them Baal Merodac was the chief. In course of time one of these many tribes would conquer

and assimilate the other racially allied tribes, and the natural result would be that the God of the conquering tribe would be placed at the head of all the gods of the other tribes. Thus the so-called boasted monotheism of the Semites was created. Among the Jews the gods went by the name of Moloch. Of these there was one Moloch which belonged to the tribe called Israel, and he was called the Moloch Yahva, or Moloch Yava. Then this tribe of Israel slowly conquered some of the other tribes of the same race, destroyed their Molochs, and declared its own Moloch to be the Supreme Moloch of all the Molochs. And I am sure most of you know the amount of bloodshed, of tyranny, and of brutal savagery, that this religious conquest entailed. Later on the Babylonians tried to destroy this supremacy of Moloch Yahva, but could not succeed. It seems to me that such an attempt at tribal self-assertion in religious matters might have taken place on the frontiers of India also. Here too all the various tribes of the Aryans might have come into conflict with one another for declaring the supremacy of their several tribal gods; but India's history was to be otherwise, was to be different from that of the Jews. India was to be alone the land—of all lands—of toleration and of spirituality, and therefore the fight between tribes and their gods did not take place long here; for one of the greatest sages that was ever born anywhere found out here in India even at that distant time—which history cannot reach—tradition itself dares not to peep into the gloom of that past when the sage arose—and declared, "He who exists is one, the sages call Him variously"—*Ekam sat vipra bahudha vadanti*—one of the most memorable sentences that was ever uttered, one of the grandest of truths that was ever discovered; and for us

Hindus this truth has been the very backbone of our national existence. For throughout the vistas of the centuries of our national life, this one idea, *Ekam sat vipra bahudha vadanti*, comes down, gaining strength and vigour as it rolls along, gaining in volume and in fulness, till it has permeated the whole of our national existence, till it is mingled in our blood, and has become one with us in every grain. We love that grand truth in every grain and our country has become the glorious land of religious toleration. It is here and here alone that they build temples and churches for the religions which have come in with the object of condemning our own religion. This is one very great principle that the world is waiting to learn from us. Aye, you little know how much of intolerance is yet abroad. It struck me more than once that I would have to leave my bones on foreign shores owing to the prevalence of religious intolerance. Killing a man is nothing for religion's sake; to-morrow they may do it in the very heart of the boasted civilisation of the West, if to-day they are not really doing so. Outcasting in its most horrible forms would often come down upon the head of a man in the West, if he dared to say a word against his country's accepted religion. They talk glibly and smoothly here in criticism of our caste laws. If you go to the West and live there as I have done, you will know that even the biggest professors you hear of are arrant cowards and dare not tell, for fear of public opinion, a hundredth part of what they hold to be really true in religious matters.

Therefore the world is waiting for this grand idea of universal toleration. It will be a great acquisition to civilisation. Nay, no civilisation can exist long unless this idea enters it. No civilisation can go on growing before fanaticism stops and bloodshed stops and brutality stops.

No civilisation can begin to lift up its head until we look charitably upon each other, and the first step towards that much needed charity is to look charitably and kindly upon the religious convictions of each other. Nay more, to understand that not only should we be charitable towards each other, but positively helpful to each other, however different our religious ideas and convictions may be. And that is exactly what we in India do, as I have just related to you. It is here in India that Hindus have built and are still building churches for Christians, and mosques for Mahomedans. That is the thing to do. In spite of their hatred, in spite of their brutality, in spite of their cruelty, in spite of their tyranny, and in spite of the filthy language they are always given to uttering, we will and we must go on building churches for the Christians and mosques for the Mahomedans till we conquer through love—till we have demonstrated to the world that love alone is the fittest thing to survive and not hatred, that it is gentleness that has the strength to live on and to fructify, but not mere brutality and physical force.

THE SPIRITUAL ONENESS OF THE WHOLE UNIVERSE.

The other great idea that the world wants from us to-day, the thinking *part* of Europe and the whole world—more, perhaps, the lower classes than the higher, more the masses than the cultured, more the ignorant than the educated, more the weak than the strong—is that eternal grand idea of the spiritual oneness of the whole universe. I need not tell you to-day, men from this Madras University, how the modern researches of Europe have demonstrated through physical means the oneness and the solidarity of the whole universe, how, physically speaking, you and I, the sun and the moon and the stars, are all but little waves or wavelets in the midst of an infinite ocean of

matter, and how Indian psychology had demonstrated ages ago that, similarly, both body and mind are but mere names or little wavelets in the ocean of matter,—the *samashti*, and how, gcing one step further, it is shown in the *Vedanta* that, behind that idea of the unity of the whole show, the real soul is also one. There is but one Soul throughout the universe, all is but one existence. This great idea of the real and basic solidarity of the whole universe has frightened many, even in this country; it even now finds sometimes more opponents than adherents; I tell you, nevertheless, that it is the one great life-giving idea which the world wants from us to-day and which the mute masses of India want for their uplifting, for none can regenerate this land of ours without the practical application and effective operation of this ideal of the oneness of things. The rational West is earnestly bent upon seeking out the rationality, the *raison d'etre* of all its philosophy and its ethics; and you all know well that ethics cannot be derived from the mere sanction of any personage, however great and divine he may have been,—of one who having been born but yesterday has had to die a few minutes after. Such an explanation of the authority of ethics no more appeals to the highest of the world's thinkers; they want something more than human sanction for ethical and moral codes to be binding, they want some eternal principle of truth as the sanction of ethics. And where is that eternal sanction to be found except in the only infinite reality that exists, in you and in me and in all, in the self, in the Soul? The infinite oneness of the soul is the eternal sanction of all morality, that you and I are not only brothers —even literature voicing man's struggle towards freedom, children have preached that for you—but that you and I are really one. This is the dictate of Indian philosophy. This

oneness is the rationale of all ethics and all spirituality. Europe wants it to-day just as much as our down-trodden masses do, and this great principle is even now unconsciously forming the basis of all the latest political and social aspirations that are coming up in England, in Germany, in France, and in America. And mark it, my friends, that in and through all the literature voicing man's struggle towards freedom, towards universal freedom, again and again you find the Indian *Vedantic* ideals coming out prominently. In some cases the writers do not know the source of their inspiration, in some cases they try to appear very original, and a few there are bold and grateful enough to mention the source and acknowledge their indebtedness to it.

FAITH IN OURSELVES—THE SECRET OF ALL GREATNESS.

My friends, when I was in America, I heard it once complained that I was preaching too much of *Advaita*, and too little of Dualism. Aye! I know what grandeur, what ocean of love, what infinite, ecstatic blessings and joy there are in the dualistic love-theories of worship and religion. I know it all. But this is not the time with us to weep even in joy; we have had weeping enough; no more, is this the time for us to become soft. This softness has been on us till we are dead; we have become like masses of cotton. What our country now wants are muscles of iron and nerves of steel, gigantic wills which nothing can resist, which can penetrate into the mysteries and the secrets of the universe, and will accomplish their purpose even if it meant going down to the bottom of the ocean and meeting death face to face in every fashion. That is what we want, and that can only be created, established and strengthened by understanding and realising the ideal of the *Advaita*, the ideal of the oneness of all. Faith, faith, faith in ourselves, faith, faith in God, this is the secret of greatness.

If you have faith in all the 330 millions of your mythological gods and in all the gods which foreigners have now and again sent into your midst, and still have no faith in yourselves, there is no salvation for you. Have faith in yourselves, and stand upon that faith and be strong; that is what we need. Why is it that we 300 millions of people have been ruled for the last one thousand years by any and every handful of foreigners who chose to walk over our prostrate bodies? Because they had faith in themselves and we had not. What did I learn in the West, and what did I see behind those talks of frothy nonsense of the Christian religious sects saying that man was a fallen and hopelessly fallen sinner? There, inside the national hearts of both Europe and America resides the tremendous power of the men's faith in themselves. An English boy will tell you—"I am an Englishman, and I will do anything." The American boy will tell you the same, and so will every European boy. Can our boys say the same thing here? No, not even the boys' fathers. We have lost faith in ourselves. Therefore to preach the *Advaita* aspect of the *Vedanta* is necessary to rouse up hearts of men, to show them the glory of their souls. It is therefore that I preach this *Advaita*, and I do so not as a sectarian but upon universal and widely acceptable grounds.

THERE IS DIVINITY RESIDING IN EVERY THING.

It is easy to find out the way of reconciliation that will not hurt the dualist or the qualified monist. There is not one system in India which does not hold the doctrine that God is within, that divinity resides with all things. Every one of our *Vedantic* systems admits that all purity and perfection and strength are in the soul already. According to some this perfection sometimes becomes, as it were, contracted, and at other times it becomes expanded

again. Yet it is there. According to the *Advaita* it neither contracts nor expands, but becomes hidden and uncovered now and again. Pretty much the same thing in effect. The one may be a more logical statement than the other. but as to the result, the practical conclusions, both are about the same; and this is the one central idea which the world stands in need of, and nowhere is the want more felt than in this, our own motherland.

OURSELVES RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL OUR MISERIES.

Aye, my friends! I must tell you a few harsh words. I read in the newspapers, when one of our poor fellows is murdered or ill-treated by an Englishman, how the howls go all over the country: I read and weep, and the next moment comes to my mind the question who is responsible for it all. As a *Vedantist* I cannot but put that question to myself. The Hindu is a man of introspection, he wants to see things in and through himself, through the subjective vision. I therefore ask myself who is responsible, and the answer comes every time, "Not the English.,— No! they are not responsible. It is we who are responsible for all our misery and all our degradation, and we alone are responsible." Our aristocratic ancestors went on treading the common masses of our country under foot, till they became helpless, till under this torment the poor, poor people nearly forget that they were human beings. They have been compelled to be merely hewers of wood and drawers of water for centuries, so much so that they are made to believe that they are born as slaves, born as hewers of wood and drawers of water. And if anybody says a kind word for them, with all our boasted education of modern times, I often find our men shrink at once from the duty of lifting up the down-trodden.

HEREDITY NO ARGUMENT TO PROVE OUR WEAKNESS.

Not only so, but I also find that all sorts of most demoniacal and brutal arguments, culled from the crude ideas of hereditary transmission and other such gibberish from the Western world, are brought forward in order to brutalise and tyrannise over the poor all the more. In the Parliament of Religions in America there came among others a young man, a Negro-born, a real African Negro, and he made a beautiful speech. I became interested in the young man, and now and then talked to him, but could learn nothing about him. But one day in England I met some Americans, and this is what they told me—that this boy was the son of a Negro chief in the heart of Africa, and that one day another chief became angry with the father of this boy and murdered him and murdered the mother also to be cooked and eaten; but that the boy fled and after passing through great hardships, travelling through distance of several hundreds of miles, he reached the sea-shore, and that there, he was taken into an American vessel and brought over to America. And this boy made that speech! After that, what was I to think of your doctrine of heredity!

PROCLAIM THE GOD IN YOU AND BE GREAT.

Aye, Brahmins!—If the Brahmin has more aptitude for learning on the ground of heredity than the Pariah, spend no more money on the Brahmin's education, but spend all on the Pariah. Give to the weak, for there all the gift is needed. If the Brahmin is born clever he can educate himself without help. If the others are not born clever, let them have all the teaching and the teachers they want. This is justice and reason as I understand. These our people, therefore, require to hear and to know what they really are, these down-trodden masses of India. Yea,

let every man and woman and child, without respect of caste or birth or weakness or strength, hear and know that behind the strong and the weak, behind the high and the low, behind every one, there is that Infinite Soul assuring the infinite possibility and the infinite capacity of all to become great and good. Let us proclaim to every soul—*Uttishthata Jagrata, prapya varan nibodhat*—"Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached." Arise, awake; awake from this hypnotism of weakness. *None* is really weak; the soul is infinite, omnipotent, and omniscient. Stand up, assert yourself, proclaim the God within you, do not deny. Too much of inactivity, too much of weakness, too much of hypnotism, has been and is upon our race. O ye modern Hindus, dehypnotise yourselves. The way to do that is found in your sacred books. Teach yourselves, teach every one his real nature, call upon the sleeping soul to see how it rises. Power will come, glory will come, goodness will come, purity will come, and every thing that is excellent will come, when this sleeping Soul is roused to self-conscious activity. Aye, if there is any thing in the *Gita* that I like, it is these two verses, coming out strong, as the very gist, the very essence of Krishna's teaching—"He who sees the Supreme Lord dwelling alike in all beings, the Imperishable in things that perish, sees indeed. For seeing the Lord as the same, everywhere present, he does not destroy the Self by the Self, and then he goes to the highest goal."

GROWTH, EXPANSION AND DEVELOPMENT ON NATIONAL LINES.

Thus there is a great opening for the *Vedanta* to do beneficent work both here and elsewhere. The wonderful idea of the sameness and omnipresence of the Supreme Soul has to be preached for the amelioration and elevation the human race, here as elsewhere,—whereever there is evil

and wherever there is ignorance and want of knowledge. I have found out in my experience that, as our scriptures say, all evil comes by relying upon differences, and that all good comes from faith in equality, in the underlying sameness and real oneness of things. This is the great *Vedantic* ideal. To have the ideal is one thing, and to apply it practically to the details of daily life is quite another thing in every case. It is very good to point out an ideal, but where is the practical way to reach it? Here naturally comes the difficult question which has been uppermost for centuries in the minds of our people, the vexed question of caste and social reformation. I must frankly let this audience know that I am neither a caste-breaker nor a mere social reformer. I have nothing to do directly with your castes or with social reformation. Live in any caste you like, but that is no reason why you should hate another caste or another man. It is love and love alone that I preach, and I base my teaching on the great *Vedantic* truth of the sameness and omnipresence of the Soul of the Universe. For the last one hundred years nearly, our country has been flooded with social reformers and various social reform proposals. Personally I have no fault to find with these reformers. Most of them are good well-meaning men, and their aims too are very laudable on certain points; but it is quite a patent fact that these one hundred years of social reform has produced no permanent and valuable result appreciable throughout the country. Platform speeches have been sent out by the thousand, denunciations have been hurled upon the devoted head of the Hindu race and its civlisation in volumes after volumes, and yet no good practical result has been achieved; and where is the reason for that? The reason is not hard to find. It is in the denunciation itself. In the first place,

as I told you before, we must try to keep our historically acquired character as a people; I grant that we have to take great many things from other nations, that we have to learn many lessons from outside; but I am sorry to say that most of our modern reform-movemente have been inconsiderate imitations of Western means and methods of work and that surely will not do for India; therefore it is that all our recent reform movements have had no result. In the second place, denunciation is not at all the way to do good. That there are evils in our society even the child can see, and what society is there where there are no evils? And let me take this opportunity, my countrymen, of telling you that, in comparing the different races and nations of the world I have been among, I have come to the conclusion that our people are, on the whole, the most moral and the most highly godly, and our institutions are, *in their plan and purpose*, best suited to make mankind happy. I do not therefore want any reformation. My ideal is growth, expansion, development on national lines. As I look back upon the history of my country, I do not find, in the whole world, another country which has done quite so much for the improvement of the human mind. Therefore, I have no words of condemnation for my nation. I tell them "You have done well: only try to do better." Great things have been done in the past in this land; there is both time and room for greater things to be done. I am sure you know that we cannot stop. If we stop we die. We have either to get forward or to go backward. We have either to progress or to degenerate. Our ancestors did great things in the past, but we have to grow into fuller life and march on even beyond their great achievements. How can we now go back and degenerate ourselves? That cannot be; that must

not be; going back will lead us to national decay and death. Therefore, let us go forward and do yet greater things: that is what I have to tell you, I am no preacher of any momentary social reform. I am not trying to remedy evils. I only ask you to go forward and to complete the practical realisation of the scheme of human progress that has been laid out in the most perfect order by our ancestors. I only ask you to work to realise more and more the *Vedantic* ideal of the solidarity of man and his inborn divine nature. Had I the time I would gladly show you how every bit of what we have now to do was laid out years ago by our ancient law-givers, and how they actually anticipated all the different changes that have taken place and are still to take place in our national institutions. They also were breakers of caste, but they were not like our modern men. They did not mean by the breaking of caste that all the people in a city should sit down together to a dinner of beefsteak and champagne, nor that all fools and lunatics in the country should marry when, where, and whom they chose, and reduce the country to a lunatic asylum, nor did they believe that the prosperity of a nation is to be gauged by the number of husbands its widows get. I am yet to see such a prosperous nation.

THE IDEAL MAN IS THE BRAHMIN.

The ideal man of our ancestors was the Brahmin. In all our books stands out prominently this ideal of the Brahmin. In Europe there is My Lord the Cardinal who is struggling hard and spending thousands of pounds to prove the nobility of his ancestors, and he will not be satisfied until he has traced his ancestry to some dreadful tyrant, who lived on a hill, and watched the people passing through the streets, and, whenever he had the opportunity, sprang out on them and robbed them. That was the busi-

ness of these nobility-bestowing ancestors, and My Lord Cardinal is not satisfied until he can trace his ancestry to one of these. In India, on the other hand, the greatest princes seek to trace their descent to some ancient sage, dressed in a bit of loin-cloth, living in a forest, eating roots, and studying the *Vedas.* It is there that the Indian prince goes to trace his ancestry. You are high caste when you can trace your ancestry to a Rishi, and not before that. Our ideal of high birth, therefore, is different from that of others. Our ideal is the Brahmin of spiritual culture and renunciation.

WHAT IS TRUE BRAHMIN-NESS ?

By the Brahmin ideal what do I mean ?The idealBrahminness is that in which worldliness is altogether absent and true wisdom is abundantly present. This is the ideal of the Hindu race. Have you not heard how it is declared that he, the Brahmin, is not amenable to law, that he has no law, that he is not governed by kings, and that his body cannot be hurt ? That is perfectly true. Do not understand it in the light which has been thrown upon it by interested and ignorant fools, but understand it in the light of the true and original *Vedantic* conception. If the Brahmin is he who has killed all selfishness and who lives and works to acquire and to propagate wisdom and the power of love, a country that is inhabited by such Brahmins altogether, by men and women who are spiritual and moral and good, is it strange to think of that country as being above and beyond all law ? What police, what military are necessary to govern them ? Why should any one govern them at all ? Why should they live under a government ? They are good and noble, they are the men of God ; they are our ideal Brahmins.

THE IDEAL OF CASTE.

We read that in the *Satya-yuga* there was only one caste to start with, and that was that of the Brahmin. We read in the *Mahabharata* that the whole world was in the beginning peopled with Brahmins, and that, as they began to degenerate, they became divided into different castes, and that, when the cycle turns round, they will all go back to that Brahminical origin. This cycle is now turning round, and I draw your attention to this fact. Therefore our solution of the caste question is not degrading those who are already high up, is not running amuck through food and drink, is not jumping out of our own limits in order to have more enjoyment; but it comes by every one of us fulfilling the dictates of our *Vedantic* religion, by our attaining spirituality, and by our becoming the ideal Brahmin. There is a law laid on each one of you here in this land by our ancestors, whether you are Aryans, or non-Aryans, Rishis or Brahmins, or the very lowest out-castes. The command is the same to you all, and that command is that you must not stop at all without making progress and that, from the highest man to the lowest *Pariah*, every one in this country has to try and become the ideal Brahmin. This *Vedantic* idea is applicable not only here but over the whole world. Such is our ideal of caste, meant for raising all humanity slowly and gently towards the realisation of the great ideal of the spiritual man who is non-resisting, calm, steady, worshipful, pure, and meditative. In that ideal there is God.

WHAT SHALL YOUR WORK BE NOW?

How are these things to be brought about? I must again draw your attention to the fact that cursing and vilifying and abusing do not and cannot produce anything good. They have been tried for years and years, and no

valuable result has been obtained. Good results can be produced only through love, through sympathy. It is a great subject, and it requires several lectures to elucidate all the plans that I have in view, and all the ideas that are, in this connection, coming to my mind day after day. I must therefore conclude, only reminding you of this fact, that this ship of our nation, O Hindus, has been usefully plying here for ages. To-day, perhaps, it has sprung a few leaks; to-day, perhaps, it has become a little worn; and if such is the case it behoves you and I, children of the soil, to try our best to stop these leaks and holes. Let us tell our countrymen of the danger, let them awake, let them mend it. I will cry at the top of my voice from one part to the other of this country to awaken the people to know their situation and their duty therein. Suppose they do not hear me, still I shall not have one word of abuse for them, not one word of curse. Great has been our nation's work in the past, and if we cannot do greater things in the future, let us have this consolation, let us all die and sink together in peace. Be patriots, love the race which has done such great things for us in the past. Aye, the more I compare notes the more I love you, my fellow-countrymen; you are good and pure and gentle; and you have been always tyrannised over; such is the irony of this material world of *Maya*. Never mind that; the spirit will triumph in the long run. In the meanwhile let us work and let us not abuse our country, let us not curse and abuse the weather-beaten and work-worn institutions of our thrice-holy motherland. Have not one word of condemnation, even for the most superstitious and the most irrational of its institutions, for they also must have served to do us good in the past. Remember always that there is not in the

world one other country whose institutions are really better in their aims and objects than the institutions of this land. I have seen castes in almost every country in the world, but nowhere is their plan and purpose so glorious as here. If caste is thus unavoidable, I would rather have a caste of purity and culture and self-sacrifice than a caste of dollar. Therefore utter no words of condemnation. Close your lips and let your hearts open. Work out the salvation of this land and of the whole world, each of you thinking that the entire burden is on your shoulders. Carry the light and the life of the *Vedanta* to every door and rouse up the divinity that is hidden within every soul. Then, whatever may be the measure of your success, you shall have this satisfaction, that you have lived, worked, and died for a great cause. In the success of this cause, howsoever brought about, is centred the salvation of humanity here and hereafter.

VEDANTA IN DAILY LIFE.*

BY SWAMI ABHEDANANDA.

——:o:——

IT has been asked again and again whether the teachings of Vedanta, sublime though they are, can be applied to our practical every-day life. Some people have an idea that, being a philosophy, Vedanta must be speculative, like any other philosophy of Europe and America, that it gives a few grand theories which can never be carried into practice. Such statements would be true if Vedanta were simply a philosophy and not a religion.

In order to become a religion, the teachings of Vedanta must be intensely practical, because where theory ends there is the beginning of true religion. Vedanta gives not only the principles of the highest philosophy, but it also teaches the practical methods which are necessary to make it a religion. If the ideals of Vedanta do not cover the whole field of life, if they do not enter into every plane of our thoughts, nay of our very existence in home life, in social and business life, in moral and spiritual life, then we must reject them as mere theories of a speculative philosophy, and must not call Vedanta a religion. The ideals of Vedanta, however, are so broad and so universal in their scope that for the last four thousand years men and women living in retirement, in caves and forests, as well as those holding the most responsible positions in society and in the state, have successfully harmonized their lives with those ideals, and have proved them to be intensely practical.

* A lecture delivered in America.

There is an impression among some people that the teachings of Vedanta are fit for those only who live like ascetics, in caves and forests, but not for those who lead a a busy American's life. Such people are entirely mistaken, because they do not know that the truths of Vedanta were first discovered and practised, not by ascetics who dwelt in caves or forests, but by kings and monarchs, ministers and statesmen who lived the busiest and most luxurious lives that we can imagine. If we read the Upanishads, the Epics—Mahabharata, and Ramayana and other historical works, we find that there were not only Hindu ministers and statesmen, but kings sitting on their thrones, discharging their royal duties of governing the states and of looking after the welfare of their many subjects, and living a busier and much more responsible life than that of an ordinary businessman of the present day, found ample time and opportunity to study Vedanta and to carry out its sublime tenets in their practical lives. When such persons could live the ideal life as given by Vedanta, what can we say of ourselves? We are not half as busy as they were. I can quote from the Upanishads many names of the ancient Hindu monarchs who faithfully followed the teachings of Vedanta while fulfilling the duties of their royal position. They not only lived up to the ideals of of Vedanta, but taught others and were considered by the people as the living example of this practical philosophy. Those who have read the Bhagavad Gita, or "The Song Celestial" as Sir Edwin Arnold calls it, will remember that the great commander of a huge army, standing in the battle-field, in the midst of the din of battle at Kurushetra, found time to discuss the ideals of Vedanta and succeeded in applying them in practice.

Many of you have seen and heard the late Swami

Vivekananda. He was a living example of the practical side of Vedanta. Up to the last moment of his life he worked like a giant under all conditions, favorable or unfavorable, bearing all kinds of hardship, discomfort and tribulation, and never moving an inch from the highest ideal of this great philosophy and religion of Vedanta. He lived a pure and chaste life always, working for others, trying to help humanity without seeking any return for his labour. He showed to the world what a true Karma Yogi was like. In other words, he proved by his example that, even in this age of materialism and commercialism one can be a sincere worker who always works for others, and lives for the good of humanity, without being guided by selfish motives or selfish desires.

The most practical side of Vedanta which will appeal to American minds, is the Karma Yoga. Karma Yoga is that branch of Vedanta which teaches that we should always work and fulfil all the duties of life, household, social or official but, at the same time, we must not consider that the performance of these duties is the highest aim and ideal of our life. On the contrary, we must regard these duties and the work of our daily life as a means to a higher end. We should also remember that every one of these works brings us new experience, make us realize the transitoriness of earthly objects, purifies our inner nature and uplifts our souls, if it be not guided by any selfish motive. Vedanta teaches that any work which proceeds from extreme selfishness is wrong and wicked, and we should avoid it. Moreover, it tells us that every action must bring a similar reaction; that all good or unselfish works produce evil results such as sorrow, suffering, misery, disease and death. Holding this ideal

before his mind, and applying it to his practical life. a student of Vedanta can go anywhere and live under any conditions, without deviating from the path of righteousness and virtue; under all circumstances, he will live a pure, unselfish life and remain contented. This is the simplest and easiest thing to practise.

First of all, we should form an ideal, and few people have their ideals. We think that we possess the highest ideal, but that may be only for a short time; next moment perhaps, the ideal has vanished, and we do not know the purpose of life, or why we are here. Therefore our mode of expression is very poor and it proceeds entirely from selfishness. Selfishness is the result of ignorance. We do not know the laws, nor do we understand how we ought to live. We look after ourselves and take care of ourselves, because that is the nearest thing to us. But we must not forget that any person in any country, possessing a fair amount of earnestness and sincerity, will get from this practice of Karma Yoga wonderful results, most benefical in this life and hereafter, if he knows the ideal and if he follows it at every moment of his life. On the contrary, if we consider that the work which we are performing is the highest aim of life, that there is no further ideal, then our life will not be worth living. But whosoever holds the highest ideal and walks in the path of unselfishness is virtuous, is unselfish, is righteous and is spiritual.

Every householder should study Karma Yoga and understand the philosophy of work, and, applying those teachings to the daily life, he will eventually attain to the highest ideal of all religions. If he believes in a personal God or in an impersonal God, or in any divine incarnation like Christ or Buddha or Krishna or Ramakrishna, what should he do? He should

every night before retiring, offer the results of his daily works, both good and bad, to Him; and, by this method, he will become free from the law of Karma, the law of action and reaction. and reach the highest goal of salvation in the end. The works of our daily lives will be transformed into acts of worship when we have learnt to offer their results to the Supreme Lord of the universe, and this can be accomplished by any man or woman, engaged in any kind of profession or business. It is the easiest method by which we can make the religion of Vedanta enter into every plane of our daily life, and herein lies the secret of great success, of freedom, of unselfishness,—that is either offer the results of your works to God, or work as an act of worship. He who has learned to offer the results of his daily works to the Almighty has learned the secret of work and is always peaceful and contented. This will be beneficial to all those who live the busiest lives, engaged in any kind of work. Works are neither low nor high; every work is great, and every work will be a means to the attaiment of divinity.

This Karma Yoga is a method by which we can get greater results by less output of our energy. The majority of people in every country waste their energy in unnecessary rush and worry for results; they have no patience to wait for the results, and what is the effect? They shatter their nerves and suffer from nervous prostration. The lack of self-control and this nervousness they will overcome if they understand the secret of work and the laws of action and reaction, of cause and sequence, that every action must bring its result, whether we worry over it or not. It must;

and what a great saving it would be, if, instead of wasting that energy in worry, we could devote it to doing other works and let the results take care of themselves! We must do our best and stop there. After performing your best, you cannot do any better, and what is the use of worry? If we lived this way, then we should be great workers.

Vedanta teaches that the less passion for work there is, the greater and more do we work. If we read the lives of all the great workers of the world, we find that they were wonderfully calm men. Men and women of implusive nature cannot do great work, cannot be steady workers: they will lose their heads. Persons who are easily disturbed by passions like anger, jealousy, hatred, ambition and selfishness cannot accomplish much. They will shatter their nerves and eventually become useless. As we find in this country, persons who are impulsive can do great work for the moment, but in the reaction they break themselves to pieces. They suffer from nervous prostration.Therefore self-control is the secret of great work, success in business, health and longevity. This we learn from Vedanta. What can be more practical or beneficial than to gain self-control and exercise it in our everyday life?

Vèdanta teaches how to be strong, physically, mentally and spiritually. Physical strength proceeds from mental strength, and mental strength in its turn is the outcome of spiritual strength. Spiritual strength must be at the back of mental and physical strengh, and that spiritual strength will come to those who live the right kind of life, who understand the laws which govern lives. The knowledge of these laws will make us free from committing mistakes,

and this knowledge comes through the study of Vedanta. The practice of Raja Yoga will help us in acquiring that knowledge. That branch of Vedanta which is called Raja Yoga is the most practical of all applied sciences, Every step of this science depends entirely upon practice. It must enter into the daily life of every individual. Take, for instance, one of the teachings of Raja Yoga,—concentration. How absolutely helpful and necessary this power of concentration is! Nothing can be achieved without it; no one can accomplish anything without possessing some amount of this power; no one can become a great artist, astronomer or physician; no one can have success, even on the Stock Exchange, without this power of concentration. It is absolutely necessary for success in business, and this power we acquire through the practice of Raja Yoga.

The same power of concentration can be applied for material prosperity as for spiritual advancement. If we want material prosperity, we can use our power of concentration in that direction and get wonderful results. If we are spiritually-minded, we can gain spiritual results by it. Concentration, when practised for spiritual results, will gradually lead us to meditation, and meditation will eventually direct the soul into the state of God-consciousness, and then we shall be able to realize the true nature of the soul and its relation to God. Thus you can understand how in Vedanta the highest ideals of true religion are made into a practical science which is intensely useful and beneficial in every possible way.

Another practical side of Vedanta is the science of breath. Anyone who understands this science of

breath possesses physical, mental and spiritual strength, can stand the sudden changes of weather, can go through any hardship without being broken to pieces. Those who have practised regularly the lessons as given in the Ycga classes held under the auspices of the Vedanta Society of New York will know how wonderful the teachings of this science of breath are and what wonderful powers can be attained. The students of Vedanta will eventually gain perfect health. By gaining control over your breath, you will make your system do anything you like. You will bring every inch of your muscle and nerve-centres under your control. As breathing exercises bring physical results, so mental powers are developed by the regulation of breath. The power of self-control is bound to come to one who has learnt the control of breath or one who has faithfully practised the breathing exercises as given by the Swamis from India. The utility of this wonderful science is proved by medical practitioners, mental scientists, and by those who teach physical culture or voice culture. Again, when this breath is brought under control it brings peace of mind. When the mind is directed towards the Supreme Ideal, you will obtain spiritual enlightenment, in which you will discover the past and future of your soul-life. Thus Raja Yoga when properly applied to our daily lives will make us strong physically, mentally and spiritually.

A student of Vedanta does not require any special or separate training in ethics or religion, because the highest ideals and the practical side of ethics are included in the teachings of Vedanta, and if we try to live according to the ideals of Vedanta, we cannot but be ethical. For instance, one of the injunctions of

practical ethics is to be truthful. Now, why should we be truthful if, by telling lies, we can gain more and enrich ourselves? The question has never been answered by any system of ethics so rationally as by Vedanta. Vedanta tells us that truthfulness is not a mere virtue, but it is the means of attaining to the absolute Truth. The absolute Truth is revealed to those only who are absolutely truthful in thought word and deed. Moral weakness and selfishness lie at the bottom of falsehood, therefore we should abandon it. We should shun the company of those who are untruthful; and although we may go through all kinds of suffering, sorrow, misery, and changes of fortune, still we must not give up the ideal of truthfulness, we must hold on to it until the last breath has passed out of our body, because truthfulness will lead to absolute Truth. The eternal Truth is never gained by falsehood but by truth.

Another ethical law which is considered to be the highest law in all religions is: "Love thy neighbor as thyself.' Now, here we can ask the same question: Why should I love my neighbor as myself? Like Christianity, Vedanta teaches this ideal. Christianity teaches it as a dogma based upon the authority of the Scriptures, and does not give any reason why and what for, but Vedanta gives the rational explanation and tells us why we should love our neighbours as ourselves: Because the true Self of our neighbor is one with our true Self. And that recognition of this spiritual oneness, when understood, is the meaning of love. Love means spiritual oneness, oneness of two souls, —that is true love. Where there is true love, there is divinity, there is the manifestation of God, and that divine love reigns in the heart and soul of a student of Vedanta

and therefore he loves all humanity. When the same love which we call human love is not backed by selfishness, it becomes divine love, and that divine love is the means by which we can realize God. God can be realized through divine love; therefore we should practice in our daily lives that unselfish love which is the highest, and never encourage or practice that which is called love but which means something different, which is based upon selfishness, which produces attachment and brings bondage in the end We should not practise or encourage it, otherwise we shall be the sufferers and the ideal of love, which is divine, will not be attained by us.

The highest aspiration of the individual soul is fulfilled when it realizes spiritual oneness with the Divine Being, and that spiritual oneness or divine love is the central ideal of Vedanta. Vedanta teaches that there is one existence, one reality, one Truth, one God, one life, one Spirit. All these differentiations and distinctions, which we perceive with our senses, are fictitious and unreal, they are all on the surface; but go below the surface and there you will see the undercurrent of one Spirit; and when that oneness is properly realized, when we have understood that we are parts of that one stupendous whole the Universal Spirit, how can we help loving that whole? We must love, we cannot help loving and through that divine love we realize the highest ideal of our lives. A student of Vedanta, who recognizes that spiritual oneness, sees that one Universal Spirit is manifesting through all living creatures, and all human beings, and therefore he loves all human beings; through all animals, and therefore he loves all animals. The most practical result of this love, this recognition of oneness, is that a student of Vedanta never injures or kills any living creature, because he knows

that there is one life, that the difference between an animalcule and a human being is only in degree but not in kind. The same life-force is expressed in so many ways, and wherever the humanitarian ideas of Vedanta are preached, there prevails compassion for everybody; there is compassion for poor animals, there hospitals are built, not only for men, women and children, but for lower animals, and there is to be found the desire to take care of the poor, suffering animals just as you would take care of a poor, suffering brother. Therefore a student of Vedanta does not kill any animal for food, because he says: "When I cannot give life to any living creature, what right have I to take it? Let it stay on and live; it has its purpose to fulfil; I must not interfere." And having this ideal in his mind he does good to all, and he would rather give his own life than take the life of another. Such a soul is a great blessing to humanity, as also to all living creatures. The practice of this ideal will bring the most wonderful results which are morally and spiritually perfect. We should teach our children that lower animals possess life and feelings. From our childhood, we have been taught that lower animals have been created for our food. Now we must change that idea and teach children that they are fulfilling certain principles of life, that they are on certain grades of evolution, and in course of time they will become human beings; we must be kind to them, and so in practical life we should learn compassion, and that compassion, when properly carried out, will lead to divine love and realization of the Supreme.

The teachings of Vedanta drive away the fear of death, because they say that death cannot attack our souls; we are immortal; by our birthright we are children

of that Universal Spirit and therefore we are immortal. Fear of death will never trouble the mind of a student of Vedanta. "As we throw away our old worn-out garment, so the soul throws away the garment of the old body at the time of death and manufactures a new one, according to its thoughts and deeds." What a great consolation is this! That we are no longer dependent upon the whim of an anthropomorphic God; that we have not been created out of nothing by the sudden whim of a Creator, but that our souls existed in the past and shall exist after death, that our pleasures and sufferings are the results of our own actions, that we are responsible for our future happiness and misery. We are not going to eternal perdition, nor are we born in sin and iniquity. Thus the teachings of Vedanta take away all fear of death and make us happy and contented in our earthly career. What can be more beneficial to us in our practical life?

Another great help in practical life which we get from Vedanta is the knowledge of the Divine Being. The Divine Being is not far from us; He is the soul of our souls; He is dwelling within us; He is both personal and impersonal, and beyond both; He can be worshipped under any name, in any form, by anyone, under any sect, creed or denomination; He is one and eternal and when we understand this, all religious animosities, quarrels, fights cease for ever. Then we consider all sectarians as our brothers and sisters; we embrace them as children of God. What could be more practical than this! Can a sectarian do so? Can an orthodox Christian embrace a Mahometan or a Buddhist? Very few possess so broad and liberal a mind as to embrace another belonging

to another religion, but Christ Himself would have embraced a Mahometan or Buddhist or any heathen as the child of divinity, of his Heavenly Father, and we should follow that example. We should try to live up to it, and then in our daily lives we shall be able to understand that secret by which we shall attain to the highest wisdom, of spiritual oneness, that will make us free. This is the meaning of salvation, emancipation from bondage, from ignorance and selfishness. According to Vedanta that salvation does not begin in the grave, but it should begin right here and now; and Vedanta shows us the way to attain to that salvation and perfection in this life. And when that knowledge and divine wisdom come, all darkness is dispelled and the divine powers begin to flow through our souls and produce their results; then we rise above the animal and material plane and shine with the spiritual light of the eternal sun.

Now we can see how all these teachings of the different branches of Vedanta fit into the different departments of our lives and how practical Vedanta is. Not only this, there is another thing, which we should not forget, that Vedanta includes the truths that have been discovered by different branches of science and shows us how those truths can be applied to our daily lives; how we can mould our daily lives according to these ideals and direct our efforts towards the highest goal, which is one. No other religion has done that; no other religion has ever been able to harmonize with the different branches of science or with the different philosophies of the world; but Vedanta includes all sciences, all philosophies and all religions,

and therefore it is universal. A student of Vedanta can be a Christian, Mahometan, Buddhist or a heathen, or an agnostic. Distinctions of caste, creed, nationality, are never recognized in the light of Vedanta. Where-ever the truths of Vedanta are preached, there prevail peace, tranquillity, self-control and spiritual enlightenment. If we understand the teachings of Vedanta and live up to the ideals, then we shall be able to say with the old philosopher Schopenhauer: "Vedanta has been the solace of my life, and it will be the solace of my death."

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